WORLD / A24 | ACROSS / A11 | BUSINESS / B1 | ENTERTAINMENT / D1

Genuinos accused of using donated rice for elections

By Marlon Ramos

CLOSE TO 40 metric tons of rice intended for typhoon victims in 2008 were diverted to bolster the candidacies in the May elections of two sons of former Philippine Gaming Corp. (Pagcor) chair Efraim Genuino, the state gaming firm said yesterday.

Jay Santiago, Pagcor spokesperson, said the rice, worth over P1.4 million, was part of the 300-MT shipment from Thailand which a Japanese gaming firm had donated to Pagcor.

GENUINOS A4

Plan to build mosque near New York's Ground Zero OK'd

Gov't may have lost up to P9B in STL

Stocks hit highest in 31 months

Plagiarism raps vs 2 movie directors

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, August 5, 2010 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 25 / No. 218 P18

PIA overshot budget by 55% to glorify Gloria

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE PHILIPPINE Information Agency (PIA) received funds from the Office of the President that doubled its budget in 2009 to trumpet the achievements of then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, a Commission on Audit (COA) report said.

The COA said the amount made available

PIA OVERSHOOT A4

Noy voids midnight appointments but not Corona's

By Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT AQUINO has ordered the recall, withdrawal and revocation of his predecessor's "midnight appointments," Malacañang announced yesterday.

Mr. Aquino issued Executive Order No. 2 revoking the appointments made by then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo on or after March 11, as well as appointments made prior to it but took effect after that date, appointments to offices that became vacant only after that date, and appointments and promotions made during the 45-day period prior to the May 10 elections.

"The positions covered or otherwise affected are hereby declared vacant," the order read in part.

A "whereas" clause exempted Chief Justice Renato Corona from being covered by the order. (See story on Page A6.)

Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Edgardo de Mesa said Malacañang had found 937 questionable appointments. But the names of the appointees, including undersecretaries, assistant secretaries and provincial agusian officers, were not immediately available.

De Mesa said each of the 937 would be examined to determine whether those were covered by the definition of midnight appointments stated in Section 1 of the order.

March 11 was the first day of the constitutional ban on presidential ap-

NOYVOIDS A4

Breakthrough in Luisita

'WASTE OF TIME' PAL officials, pilots meet doesn't take off

By Paolo G. Montecillo

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES (PAL) management has snubbed a meeting with a group of pilots organized by Malacañang, aimed at resolving the shortage of crewmen to fly the company's workhorse Airbus A330 aircraft.

PAL president Jaime J. Bautista said it would be a "waste of time" to meet with the group claiming to represent the resigned pilots.

"The pilots who resigned have left the country already and the group that met with government [officials Tuesday night], they are not our pilots," he said.

Bautista told the Inquirer that "PAL pilots don't have a labor union."

Malacañang was supposed to meet with the airline's management and the 25 pilots who recently resigned to finally meet face-to-face on Wednesday as both sides could resolve problems that led to a number of flight cancellations since last weekend.

The Palace has ruled out a takeover of PAL, citing the state's own financial and technical limitations.

The lack of pilots has forced PAL to scrap three flights daily

PAL OFFICIALS A10

FIRST PAYCHECK President Aquino shows off his P63,003.17 paycheck for July, his first as P-Noy. He received the Landbank check on Monday. The RP President has a monthly salary of P197,800. Being a bachelor, Mr. Aquino is not entitled to tax exemptions given to taxpayers with children. (See story on Page A14.)

Farmers have option to get land, keep stocks

By Philip C. Tubeza

PRESIDENT Aquino's family has reached a settlement under which farmers in its Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI) will be given the option to retain shares of stock in the corporation or secure parcels of land from a third of the 6,500 hectare plantation up for distribution, an HLI source said.

The deal could set the tone for Mr. Aquino's policy on agrarian reform. In his State of the Nation Address July 26, the newly elected President did not touch on this key social justice issue that has fueled a communist insurgency for generations.

Mr. Aquino's cousin, Fernando Cojuangco, 47, HLI chief operating officer, negotiated the deal, which the Inquirer source said would be signed today and then forwarded to the Supreme Court.

The court is to decide on a directive from the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) to HLI to parcel out the hacienda to its

BREAKTHROUGH A4

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO...?

Cherry Hills 11 years later: Still no justice

By Lawrence de Guzman
Inquirer Research

ELEVEN YEARS after a massive landslide destroyed over 300 homes and killed 99 people at Cherry Hills Subdivision in Antipolo City, the homeowners are still yearning for justice.

It was only two years ago that the Court of Appeals affirmed the Department of Justice to proceed with the criminal prosecution of the subdivision developers. The pretrial isn't until this November.

Many of the residents have left to rebuild their lives elsewhere, but others have stayed on, and are unable to forget.

The disaster occurred on the night of Aug. 3, 1999, after four days of rain in Rizal and Metro Manila. Survivors said they heard a loud creaking noise and

CHERRY A8

'Captain Ball' tagged in 'Garci' fraud

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

A "VERY influential person" called the shots in the military operation to rig the 2004 presidential election, according to a senior military officer who has disclosed details of the purported attempted cheating in his former area of responsibility.

Rear Admiral Felicisimo Angeles, the current commander of the Armed Forces' National Capital Region Command (NCRCom), said the officer, whom he referred to only as "Captain Ball," had personally directed the cheating operation and even threatened him when he refused to cooperate.

Angeles said he had disclosed the identity of "Captain ball" along with the details of the attempted cheating operation in Tawi-Tawi to the fact-finding body headed by his superior Mauro Mayuga, the then Navy flag officer in command and vice admiral.

CAPTAIN A10

'Walking time bomb' now sits in House

By Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—His lawyers claimed that he was a "walking time bomb" because of a "severe" heart ailment so the court, for humanitarian reasons, allowed him to leave jail although his case of parricide was nonbailable.

That was six years ago, but rule breaker Ruben Ecleo Jr., now 55, has not undergone surgery and has been seen in such activities as performing in rock concerts and winning a seat in Congress, representing Dinagat Island, in the May 10 elections.

Now, prosecutors want him back in detention after "taking his sworn time" and face trial for the death of his wife, Aleta Bacolod Ecleo.

"He is not really sick," lawyer Alberdin Sipalay said on Friday. But Ecleo's lawyers said only doctors could determine his real state of health.

Ecleo, supreme leader of the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Associa-

WALKING A10

JAIL-HOUSE ROCK Surigao del Norte Rep. Ruben Ecleo Jr. performed at a rock concert and ran for Congress despite a nonbailable parricide case. He chose fully attends the orientation for new House members.

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

EZ2* 14 6 18 28 20 28
SUERTRES* 6 1 8 6 8 7 1 2 7
FOUR DIGIT* 1 6 4 2
MEGALOTTO 6/45 14 15 27 28 36 44 PhP3,464,123.80
6/55 GRANDLOTTO 12 23 36 42 43 49 PhP7,278,922.00

TERROR IN 3 PROVINCES

PNP goes after private armies

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

AT LEAST 65 "private armies" out of the 107 that authorities said have been terrorizing the provinces of Abra, Maguindanao and Misamis Occidental are being targeted by the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces in a new campaign to neutralize private armed groups.

PNP Chief Director General Jesus Verzosa and AFP Chief Lt. Gen. Ricardo David signed a joint directive for a campaign to dismantle private armed groups after a conference at the Camp Crame PNP headquarters yesterday.

The formal partnership was in line with President Aquino's marching orders to go after partisan armed groups," Verzosa told a news conference.

He said that within the week, a joint task will be created to operate in Abra, Maguindanao and Misamis Occidental.

It will be created at the Cipo (directorate for integrated police operations) and unified command level to make sure that the effort against the partisan armed groups is "done across-the-board," he said.

65 groups active

He said that according to the PNP, only 65 of 107 identified armed groups are active.

"We have engaged some of them starting January this year," he said.

He did not identify the politicians who are maintaining private armies, saying they are "interesting" the list culled from intelligence reports.

Asked if the communist armed group New People's Army is considered a partisan armed group, Verzosa replied: "Yes, it depends if they are involved, or if they are enlisted by politicians for political reasons or economic reasons, they are included."

He said the plan is to concentrate on the three provinces first in the operations against private armies there that the PNP started during the election period.

Tipping point

Tackling the private armies in some parts of Mindanao requires a different task, Verzosa said.

The existence of private armies reached a tipping point on Nov. 23, 2009 when 57 civilians, half of them journalists were killed in a grisly massacre in Ampatuan, Maguindanao, allegedly upon orders of the powerful Ampatuan political clan.

Verzosa said the situation in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) will be handled differently.

Historical roots

"We have to look at the historical background of these areas and also some cultural considerations. The long incidents of rumbles in that area also created different formations of partisan armed groups like CVOs. Some are criminal some are connected to political personalities. We are also looking at the idiosyncrasies in that area. So you will note that there are different dimensions that may not be present in some areas," he said.

Verzosa said the joint task forces would arrest identified members of private armed groups and confiscate loose and illegal firearms. These joint task forces would report directly to the directorates of integrated police operations and their respective regions.

The campaign will also include serving up checkpoints, he said.

Culture of violence

He said the problem of private armies around has gone on for so long that people in these areas no longer mind them.

"And these has emerged a culture of violence in these two provinces, Abra and Maguindanao," he said.

He said Misamis Occidental has also suffered for a long time the "presence of criminal elements" involved in smuggling, kidnap for ransom, robbery and drug trafficking.

"Somehow these partisan armed groups are used for various criminal activities," he said.

Archaeologists plan more digs around Cagayan caves

By Kristine L. Alave

THE LEADER of the excavation team that dug up the oldest homo fragment in the Asia-Pacific in a Cagayan Valley cave said they were planning more excavations in the area to seek answers to the mysteries unearthed by the remains.

University of the Philippines anthropology professor Armand Mijares, the leader of the team, also found the fossilized foot bone fragment the size of a child's finger in the Callao cave in Peñablanca, said other caves in Cagayan province could hold more artifacts to support data culled from humans were in the Philippine archipelago much earlier than previously believed.

"This changes the time depth," he said.

The bone fragment recovered by Mijares' team in 2007 produced by at least 25,000 years the human born the Tabon Man of Palawan, which was said to be 47,000 years old.

It is also older than the remains found in Nah Tare in Borneo, which are about 42,000 years old.

Mijares said the next step for them is to run more studies and undertake more excavations to see if they can find other artifacts to help them recreate a more detailed picture of life in pre-historic Philippines.

"We know the fauna and the flora but the data we have is still limited.

The excavations in Callao cave started in 2003 with funding and technical help from the ITE Australian National University and the National Museum. Mijares said they would be lining up funding for more excavations in the area.

Mijares said their discovery broke long-held assumptions and raised questions on pre-historic settlements in the region.

For marks on the surface of the bone showed that the Callao man used tools.

GMA ally favors Truth body; Arroyos want Congress OK

THE TRUTH commission is the project name for the Aquino administration in defend itself from allegations of wrongdoing and the former president should welcome the opportunity to ascertain the veracity of the charges.

Former Justice Secretary and solicitor general Silvestre Bello III, a staunch ally of former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, made this comment yesterday as he came out in favor of the creation of the truth commission of President Aquino.

But the former President's two sons, Reps. Mikey and Dato Arroyo, joined the chorus of others in allies in let the creation of the truth commission go through the normal congress mechanism and not just by executive fiat.

But Bello, a defeated senatorial candidate under Arroyo's Lakas-Kampi coalition, welcomed the creation of the commission by executive order.

"We must remember the government investigators if we are not hiding anything wrong. In fact, this is the proper venue where one can defend himself," he added in a press statement. "Everyone wants the truth to come out."

Bello said he was "willing to cooperate to shed facts if summoned for the investigation." He explained that just like the Mabo and Maguja independent investigations, the truth commission was created by the virtue of an executive order, and does not need legislation.

Bello also said that there is no truth to reports that a (also) party meeting decided to oppose the creation of the truth commission.

"I support the President's call for a full investigation by the said commission," Bello said.

Bello also expressed confidence in the ability of former Chief Justice Hilario Davide in resolve issues of alleged irregularities under the previous administration.

Mikey Arroyo, the representative of the Ang Galing Pinoy (AGP), a party list group representing security guards and security agencies expressed apprehension that Malacañang, through the media, was trying to consolidate the hands of the police and influence the Supreme Court into deciding in favor of the legality of the creation of the truth commission.

The lawmaker cited the said's pronouncement of Senators Juan Arroyo and Miriam Defensor-Santiago advocating a congressional Augmentar on the body's creation via a law.

Sen. Arroyo had assailed the advisers of President Aquino, saying that Executive Order No. 1 creating the truth commission had no legal leg to stand on because it had no power of subpoena and contempt.

Santiago, for her part, had said that the administration should leave the "hostility" to act Congress by means of investigations of the Senate, instead creating the body to investigate the sins of the Arroyo administration. With Michael Ubac

Protest mars Turkish flour product expo

By Tina G. Santos

HAVING BEEN cleared by the local food and drug administration, Turkey's biggest flour producers and exporters are highlighting their products at the World Food Expo 2010 being held at the SMX Convention Center in Pasay City.

But about 15 demonstrators led by Ronald Lumbao of the People's Movement Against Poverty (PMAP) yesterday staged a lightning rally and engaged security guards of the SMX complex in a brief scuffle. They were t-shirts saying "Pondasi ng mura, pahirap sa mga bakers" (cheap flour, burden to the bakers) and "no to importation of cheap Turkish flour.

Earlier, local flour millers brought up the possibility that most Turkish flour, which was being sold 25 percent cheaper than locally milled flour, was toxic. The Department of Health, however, said it has cleared Turkish flour imports were safe.

"The mills in Turkey are some of the biggest and most modern in the world. These mills produce flour in compliance with international standards on quality and safety," said Turgay Ugur, deputy chief of Canada, Dubai, Uzbekistan and Philippine Unions Sector Committee, an organization of flour producers and exporters in Turkey.

"We are assuring everyone that the wheat flour that we produce in Turkey is safe and of good quality," he added at a press conference yesterday.

Ugur's claim was supported by Rotondo-based businessman Ernesto Chan Sr. Group, whose Makaton Longlife Trading Corporation is a leading importer and wholesaler of Turkish flour in the country.

Chang said the cheaper Turkish flour has helped many bread and noodle making companies thrive—and keep down the price of the Filipino panadesal, a common breakfast staple.

USS BLUE RIDGE

7th Fleet flagship makes port call

By Jerry E. Esplanada

THE USS Blue Ridge, flagship of the United States 7th Fleet, steamed into Manila yesterday for a four-day goodwill visit.

Capt. Brady Layton, commanding officer of the 19,800-ton warship, called their port "a consideration of the special and historic relationship" between the US and the Philippines.

The partnership "holds enduring ties between our two peoples, including joint service during World War II, Korea, Vietnam and the global war on terror," Layton said.

"We crew enjoy our port call here truly as an honor and a privilege," he said, adding that the visit was not concerned with ongoing Chinese naval exercises in the South China Sea.

"Concerning (like the People's Republic of China) conduct operations in international waters routinely and I don't particularly see and issue with it," responded Layton when asked to comment on the Chinese naval exercises.

According to Layton, the Blue Ridge had just come from Subic and was in Manila to conduct community service activities, including the construction of tossed Kalinga children's day care and learning centers, and some clean-up work at the Clark cemetery (in Pampanga).

In a statement, the Blue Ridge said its sailors "will have the opportunity to go on liberty, visit the recreation tours and eat and relax in the city dubbed "The Pearl of the Orient."

"Many of the (about 1,200) sailors on board have families and friends here in Manila," said Layton.

"I'm sure they're anxious to go on liberty and visit loved ones," he said. For the rest of the crew, I know they look forward to exploring the special culture and warm hospitality that the people of Manila have to offer."

Filipino-American Petty Officer First Class Jason Wimpact said he was excited not only about their port call. "I was also about the base development here, including President Aquino's assumption to office."

The Sussex, Saratogan native said he was "happy that (Aquino) won in the May elections. I think he's doing great. The last one down is good, man."

Listing of new voters starts

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE COMELEC (Commission on Elections) yesterday announced that it was holding a 10-day registration of new voters which began on Monday and will end on Aug. 13.

Unregistered voters can visit the offices of their local Comelec offices from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. until Aug. 13 to register. The offices will also be open this Saturday and Sunday.

Besides registering new voters, the local Comelec offices also prepared to re-activate the registration of "idle voters," a number that experts say, can sway election results in registration records.

Teenagers from 16 years to 18 years old, are also register for the upcoming barangay elections starting tomorrow up, 10 Aug. 13, also from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Comelec experts about 1.5 million new voters to register during the 10-day registration period.

Comelec director James Jimenez, the election body's spokesperson said that while only a few registered yesterday of fields still expected the number of new voters in each more than a million.

"We expect that this would include those who just turned 18 and those who were not able to register for the last national elections," Jimenez told reporters.

Jimenez outlines requirements should bring documents to identify themselves, like a National Bureau of Investigation clearance, a driver's license, a passport, or a Professional Regulation Commission license.

AN OPEN LETTER TO P-NOY

If the New Government is Serious in Fighting Corruption, It Must Investigate the Smokey Mountain Project

A two-page advertisement recently appeared in newspapers with the title "Who Benefited from the Smokey Mountain Project?" It tried to doodorize the implementation by R-II Builders, Inc – owned by father and son Reghis and Michael Romero – of the controversial project once dubbed by Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago as the "most lopsided" in Philippine history.

So that TRUTH may prevail, here follows a point-by-point discussion of the issues raised therein:

1. The issue is not the legality of the original Smokey Mountain project as affirmed by the Supreme Court, but the excessive payment being demanded by R-II. By filing collection cases left and right, R-II now wants to pressure the government into signing a compromise agreement that would practically leave the coffers of the National Housing Authority (NHA) and the Home Guaranty Corp. (HGC) empty.

2. R-II demands P1.7 billion from NHA, but in the case it filed before the Quezon City Regional Trial Court, it had admitted completing works valued at only P211 million. Of the P1.7 billion, the NHA has already paid R-II P806 million, without the approval of Commission on Audit. Is it not questionable to demand P1.7 billion for actual work done amounting to only P211 million?

3. Under the joint venture, R-II was supposed to fully fund the P6.6 billion project, but it managed to raise only P300 million. Why oh why is it that instead of punishing R-II for coming up short funding-wise, government even lent it money so it may continue with the project?

4. Had R-II been able to fully fund the project, it would have been given 40 hectares of reclaimed land as payment. Logic dictates that it should not get the 40 hectares for its failure to put up the P6.6 billion. But how come R-II ends ended up being given not just 40 hectares but 79 hectares for reneging on its funding obligation? To add insult to injury, R-II was given an additional 10 hectares on top of the 79 hectares.

5. The reclaimed lands should be owned by HGC because it made the guarantee of earnings for the government agencies Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), Social Security System (SSS), Landbank, Pag-Ibig and Abot-Kaya Pabahay Fund – that had to come to R-II's rescue by forming an Asset Pool. But instead of turning over the 79 hectares to HGC when a call was made on its guarantee, R-II took control of the land (including the vastly profitable Harbour Center Industrial Park) and rented it out. To date, R-II has yet to remit a single centavo of the rentals amounting now to millions of pesos.

6. The only valid claim of R-II is its subordinated Smokey Mountain Project Participation Certificate covering its share in the combined assets of the Smokey Mountain Project. But it cannot impose its ownership of lands that are really owned by HGC.

7. R-II also wrested from HGC ownership of the bulk of shares of stock of Harbour Center. The Smokey Mountain Project Asset Pool (now owned by HGC by virtue of a Deed of Assignment) bought shares of Harbour Center worth P1.7 billion equivalent to 10 hectares of reclaimed land. But R-II did not issue any stock certificate. Apart from this, the common shares previously worth P807 million had been reduced in value by half because of claimed losses and purchase of equipment. All this was not approved by the Asset Pool governing body nor by HGC.

8. Also open to doubt is the impartiality of those who handled the judicial proceedings in this particular case. Recently, the Court of Appeals' Special 18th Division made a complete turn-around and sided with R-II. The court decision paved the way for the expected annulment of the Deed of Assignment/Conveyance of the Asset Pool of SMDRP on the ground that this was not notarized. Based on the rules of evidence, the validity of a document is not established by a notary public.

9. The brouhaha had the then Vice President and housing czar Noli de Castro saying that: "There is no agreement and plan to sign any compromise agreement with Reghis Romero. That is not on our agenda and there's not enough time." But how come VP De Castro sent then President Arroyo a memorandum seeking release of P1.46 billion for payment to HGC, the very exact amount cited in the bank's compromise agreement that was supposed to be signed by R-II, NHA and HGC?

IT IS VERY CLEAR WHO BENEFITED FROM SMOKEY MOUNTAIN PROJECT.
IT IS NOT THE POOR, NOT THE FILIPINO PEOPLE,
ONLY R-II BUILDERS INC. AND SOME PUBLIC OFFICIALS.

GARBAGE PROJECT Is it right for Reghis Romero to demand that he be paid P1.7 billion for a housing project that actually cost his company only P211 million to build? Can this (kindly look at the picture of the dilapidated structure amidst garbage) be worth P211 million, much more P1.7 billion?

'KUNG WALANG CORRUPT, WALANG MAHIRAP!'
- Pres. Noynoy Aquino

'Domeng' strengthens; storm signals up

By Kristine Alave

TROPICAL DEPRESSION "Domeng" has intensified into a storm after it merged with a low pressure area that formed off Batanes, prompting the weather bureau to raise storm signals over 19 provinces in Ilocos and Northern Luzon.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) declared public storm signal No. 2 in Cagayan, Babuyan Islands, Calayan Islands Isabela, and Batanes Group of Islands as severe Domeng continues on its path to north Luzon.

Signal No. 1 was declared in Nueva Ecija, Aurora,Ilocos, Norte Ilocos, Ilocos, Benguet, Mt. Province, Pangasinan, Kalinga, Abra, Apayao, La Union, and Ilocos Provinces.

According to Pagasa's 5 p.m. bulletin yesterday, Domeng, the fourth typhoon to enter the country this year, based with a low pressure area that was formed off of Batanes a few days ago.

Pagasa said Domeng has increased its strength and speed as it continued to track northern Luzon, with a maximum sustained winds of 65 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 80 kph.

The center was seen 450 km east of Itbayat. The storm was moving westward at 15 kph.

Pagasa said the storm is expected to hit Northern Luzon today. It noted that the storm will be 40 km east of Batanes this afternoon.

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Breakthrough in Luisita; farmers have 2 options

From page A1

workers, saying that the stock distribution option (SDO) has failed to improve their lives—the mandate of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

A hearing on the case has been scheduled on Aug. 18.

Under the proposed settlement, the 18,000 former beneficiaries recognized by the HLI would be allowed to choose whether to retain their shares under the SDO or surrender these in exchange for land.

"Those who opt for land distribution would be given a 6-hectare lot package—and they would no longer be obligated to pay Luisita's debts. Also, the benefits they received before would not be taken away," the source said.

The family has said that the Hacienda was saddled with unspecified debts.

"Of course, since the land is distributed, it would be up to the beneficiaries to decide what to do with their lots. They could set up a cooperative," he added.

The source, who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to speak publicly, said that an "agreement in principle" with representatives of four labor unions in the hacienda is in talks that began during the presidential election campaign.

"This is a 'breakthrough settlement agreement,' the source said. "We dont want to continue with the dominating situation where we continue fighting. Then back to a breakthrough in this impasse."

HLI spokesperson Tony Ligon, asked for comment, said only: "I can confirm that talks are continuing with legitimate farmers beneficiaries."

Union unaware of deal

Lito Bais, acting president of the United Luisita Workers Union (ULWU), the main labor group in the plantation, said he was unaware of the deal. Bais urged the strike in 2004 that turned violent and left 14 people dead. (The bloodiest bloc of hacienda workers.)

"I don't know about any offer from Luisita or a comprehensive agreement," Bais said when reached by cellphone even through his mobile phone at 6:40 last night. He said the union officers met last night to discuss participation in the Supreme Court hearing on the case.

The source, however, said that Ulwu was among the four unions involved in the negotiations.

CARP was enacted in 1988 by Ms. Aquino's mother, Corazon Cojuangco Aquino, to fulfill a campaign promise two years earlier she became president in a People Power revolution. The SDO is an alternative to land distribution under CARP.

DAR directive: A reprisal

HLI is contesting the DAR's directive, approved by the presidential agrarian reform council, during the Arroyo administration. The most subsequently issued a temporary restraining order.

The Cojuangcans have said that the DAR order was a reprisal after the late Corazon Aquino joined calls for then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo resignation for allegedly stealing the 2004 election, a charge she has denied.

The latest version of CARP signed last year calls for the completion of land distribution in five years. This covers more than 1 million ha of the nation's most productive farms, including Hacienda Luisita, that have evaded land distribution.

Plantation-style farming

Around 4.3 million ha of mostly public lands have been handed over to tenant tillers under CARP over the past two decades.

Fernando Cojuangco told the New York Times last year when the agrarian reform issue came up during the election campaign that sugar production could only be done "plantation-style."

The source said the managers and farmers began talking after Mr. Aquino announced during the campaign that labor problems at the hacienda and calls for land reform would be addressed soon.

The source explained that only around 3,400 ha, out of the 6,500-ha hacienda, would be distributed because the farmers' shares account for only a third of HLI's total shares.

"The farmers who choose to remain under the SDO would also receive a financial package but they will have to wait for development because Luisita would undergo a rehabilitation program," the source said. The hacienda's operations have been paralyzed as a result of the strike.

The source said that around P680 million would be given to farmers to be released "in tranches."

How a matter of choice

While the SDO was approved by an overwhelming majority of workers when it came in 1989 as the hacienda, the source said this time the farmers will be allowed to make a choice and that this will be respected.

"The referendum will be your own decision, your vote," the source said.

While insisting that the DAR was not privy to the negotiations, the source said that the government would have to pay HLI for the distributed land.

"The market price will be determined by values in workers in the law," the source said.

Judicial question

"What has been brought to the Supreme Court was a mandamus/ complaint for interpretation. It's really a judicial question," the source said.

"Whether there is a compromise agreement, or whether there is none, that is beside the point. The Supreme Court will still have to resolve a decision especially of those questions of law," he added. With reporter from Janette Toral, Inquirer Central Luzon

IN THE KNOW Hacienda Luisita: Bigger than Cabeocan City

HACIENDA LUISITA straddles parts of Tarlac City and Concepcion and La Paz towns in the province of Tarlac. The property, which originally spanned 6,435 hectares, is bigger than Cabeocan City's 5,049 ha).

Previously called Compania General Tabacalera in Filipinas (or Tabacalera), it was later named after the wife of Jose Antonio Lopez, who headed Tabacalera when it acquired the hacienda in 1882.

The 1hk rebellion in the 1890s led the Spanish owners of Tabacalera to sell the estate and its sugar mill, Central Azucarera de Tarlac (CAT).

In 1958, the Cojuangcos acquired the sugar mill and the estate through a loan from the Government Service Insurance System and a dollar loan from the Manufacturer's Trust of New York, which was guaranteed by the Central Bank of the Philippines "with the view of distributing the hacienda to small farmers."

Jose Cojuangco, Sr., father of Corazon Aquino, appointed his son-in-law, Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., as the hacienda's first administrator.

A year later, Hacienda Luisita was became the top sugar producer in Central Luzon.

The estate is now owned and managed by Hacienda Luisita Inc. (HLI). HLI was incorporated on Aug. 23, 1988, an almost two years after Corazon Aquino took office as president in 1986.

Stock distribution option

Corazon Aquino made agrarian reform her centerpiece campaign to promote social justice and agricultural development, and enacted the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law on June 10, 1988.

But Hacienda Luisita remained intact because it opted to distribute stocks to its line of land to its farmworkers under the stock distribution option (SDO) scheme. In 1989, nearly 1,000 ha of the estate were planted under an SDO agreement between the landowners and the farmworkers.

On Nov. 16, 2004, a number of sugar mill workers were killed and dozens others were wounded when police and military forces dispersed hacienda residents who were striking workers demanding.

PIA overshot budget by 55% to glorify Gloria's achievements

From page A1

to the PIA, which was 55 percent more than the budget of the government information bureau, was in violation of the General Appropriations Act (GAA) and the manual for national government agencies.

The report said the P6 received from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) a notice of cash allocations amounting to P344,150 million, even though only P222,480 million was appropriated for it under the national budget.

Spike in ad spending

The additional funding led to a 41-percent spike in advertising expenses, from P16, 429 million in 2009 to P167,429 million in 2009, which went mostly to ads for Ms Arroyo's achievements.

"Notwithstanding that the excess funds received from DBM were funds of DP [Office of the President], the funds received still exceeded the programmed appropriations of PIA under the [GAA]," the COA said.

"This has also increased the advertising expenses by P31,286,881.05 or 41 percent from P76,128,893.17 in 2008 to P167,428,774.22 in 2009," it said.

The PIA ads included placements in newspapers early this year. The ads detailed on the administration's gains in the economy, social development, infrastructure, law and order, job generation, agriculture, energy, environment and digital infrastructure.

The print ads, titled, "Gamin Tayo Noon, Gumila Tayo Ngayon," came under fire because they carried the initials and campaign color of administration standard-bearer Gilbert Teodoro.

Special projects

Of the P132 million in advertising expenses, 90 percent was charged to the funds received from the Office of the President for Special Projects, the COA said.

"Examination of some of the items [special allotment release orders] disclosed that the source of [the] fund is considered in general terms with the word FY 2009 SAA, 4th SDO for the purpose of information campaign of the President's achievements from FY 2001 to FY 2008," the COA said.

The COA said the PIA should only use the money allocated for it under the budget.

"We recommended and management agreed to spend funds only from authorized in the GAA intended for operations and to return excess release to BBM," it said.

Incomplete documents

The COA also found that PIA's advertising placements worth P48.8 million, or 29 percent of 58 transactions, were not supported by complete documents.

"Thus, the existence, validity and legality of the transactions could not be readily determined," it said.

The COA said the PIA's practice was to pay a broadcasting company or a broadcaster in advance. While the transaction was pending, the delivery of supporting documents such as billing invoice and proof of publication was held in abeyance.

After the completion of the advertising placements, the broadcast company or broadcaster was supposed to deliver the supporting documents to the PIA. However, the documents for the 58 transactions were not delivered, according to the COA.

It also said that cash advances (P40.365 million) to officers and employees were unliquidated as of Dec. 31, 2009 in violation of the rules. But as of Jan. 31 this year, P5.27 million in cash advances had been liquidated and recorded.

Ailing Legacy owner to stay in detention in QC jail

[illegible] Dr. Jo Angeles, the owner of the bankrupt Legacy group, continues to be detained at the Quezon City Police District headquarters until the judge who ordered his arrest issues a new order.

Judge Edgar Vasquez, the warrant chief, said Quezon City Judge Clarita Nieves has been informed of Dr. Jo Angeles's arrest and detention.

Vasquez said Dr. Jo Angeles' lawyer had submitted his office that they will be filing a motion to have the Legacy owner transferred to the armed unit at 1Pt0 Cathedral Heights, a condominium inside the St. Luke's Medical Center complex.

But as the [illegible] months has been filed on behalf of Dr. Jo Angeles, said Emilio Acevedo, a chief member of the Quezon City court of Judge Clarita Nieves.

"We only received the return of warrant and request for continued stay of Dr. Jo from the police," said Acevedo in a phone interview.

She said Nieves was holding hearings in Baybay Town where the documents from the Quezon City police.

In the absence of a court order, Dr. Jo Angeles will remain in detention, said Escoto.

He also denied giving Dr. Jo Angeles any special treatment, explaining that he is not to be separated from the other inmates because of his medical condition.

Dr. Jo Angeles, who is undergoing chemotherapy treatment, is facing several syndicated estafa charges over the collapse of his financial empire that included mutual funds, pre-need firms, a credit card company and a car financing firm.

Acney Cervejal

Corrections

IN THE AUG. 1 ISSUE, a Sunday Business article on Page B4—"Maritime disputes of Rizal trade"—mistakenly referred to Grand Imam Ahmad Dimapuno, head of the Government's Muslim Trustees Association, as Mahmoog.

* * *

IN THE FIRST EDITION of the Aug. 4 issue, an article on Page A4 carried the wrong headline. The headline should have read: "Gov't cannot compel pilots to go back to PAL, says Enrile's"—not "Enrile can't force pilots to go back to PAL."

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a story on Page A5 carried an erroneous headline—"Israel to expel 400 Filos kids." The Philippine Embassy in Israel was still checking if indeed there are Filipino among at least 400 children of undocumented migrant workers to be expelled by Israel.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, an article on Page A1 0—"He saved his commission, truth to be out in open"—misquoted Bureau Mana Prep. Teodoro Casiño. The quote should have read: "The last time, it was the President who was converting the [volume of documents]," in apparent reference to former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo—not "The last time, it was President Aquino who was preserving the [volume of documents]."

* * *

Readers may send their requests for corrections of factual errors in writing to the Inq Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, 5th floor, Philippine Star Mansion, 4 Sta. Rosa St., Mandaluyong City, fax No. [illegible] e-mail address: [illegible]

Complaints about lack of balance or objectivity may be sent to the Ombudsman's e-mail address: [illegible]

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, August 5, 2010
19th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major
1st Reading: Jer 31:31-34
Gospel: Mt 16:13-23

Jesus came to Caesarea Philippi. He asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of man is?" They said, "For some of them you are John the Baptist, for others Elijah or jeremiah or one of the prophets."

Jesus asked them, "But you, who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon Barjona, for it is not flesh or blood that has revealed this to you but my Father in heaven.

And now I say to you: You are Peter (or Rock) and on this rock I will build my Church, and never will the powers of death overcome it.

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and what you unbind on earth shall be unbound in heaven."

Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

From that day Jesus began to make it clear to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, he would suffer many things from the Jewish authorities, the chief priests and the teachers of the Law. He would be killed and be raised on the third day.

Then Peter took him aside and began to reprimand him, "Heaven forbid, Sir, this misfortune will happen to you." But Jesus turned to him and said, "Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle in my path. You are thinking not as God does, but as people do."

Commentary:

"What about you?" Jesus asked them. Who do you say I am?"

The whole purpose of life is coming to know who Jesus is for me.

The answer to that question determines what I do with my life, what I suffer often, and also, finally, my life and its aim or basic reason.

Christian Communications Foundation, Inc., 4 Bonanza St., EP Village, Bonanza, Quezon City, 1105, Metro Manila, Philippines. Tel. 9351-4112, 9351-4113, 9351-4114, e-mail: [illegible]

Website: http://www.christianlifecenter.com/Christian%20Calendar/Daily%20Gospel.htm

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Palace: Corona appointment is 'settled law'

By Norman Bordadora

THE PALESTINE of the appointment of Chief Justice Renato Corona has been authenticated by President Aquino, his chief legal counsel, Edmundo de Mesa, said yesterday.

De Mesa made the statement at a news briefing in the course of announcing the President's Executive Order No. 2, which recalled, withdrew and revoked his predecessor's "midnight appointments."

In reference to the "whereas" clause that exempted Corona from the order, De Mesa was asked if Mr. Aquino had recognized the validity of then President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's appointment of Corona as Chief Justice on May 13.

"That should be obvious by now," De Mesa replied.

Mr. Aquino recognized Corona's appointment as Chief Justice when the Supreme Court upheld it despite controversies that it was made within the election ban on appointments, according to his spokesperson Edwin Lacierda.

"When the decision was precisely joined by the Supreme Court, there was a motion for reconsideration. And in spite of that finality for reconsideration, the original decision was upheld," Lacierda said. "So much, by operation of law and respecting the three branches of government, it has become settled law."

Oath of office

Lacierda said Mr. Aquino's decision to ask Associate Justice Conchita Carpio-Morales to administer his oath of office was based on a personal belief that Arroyo should not have appointed Corona to replace Chief Justice Reynato Puno.

"We do not take this as an affront on the person of the Chief Justice but more on the principle that he believes that ... Arroyo made an appointment that is not valid," Lacierda said.

He said that as "settled law," the high court's decision should be followed by all branches of the government.

Lacierda also called attention to the "Red Mass" celebrated early last month at Manila Cathedral, where the President "already acknowledged the presence ... of Chief Justice Corona."

"And also in the State of the Nation Address [on July 26], the President] gave opening salutations to the Chief Justice. So I think Corona is none any more or the [position] of Chief Justice Corona," Lacierda said.

Noy voids GMA midnight appointments but not Corona's

From page A1

postponed that can void Arroyo's term ended on June 30.

Undermining successor

De Mesa said the 917 questionable appointments made by Arroyo undermined her successor's prerogatives.

"The sheer number of these appointments gives basis to the opinion or belief that there were made for the purpose of depriving the next President of the prerogative of making those appointments," De Mesa said.

"They were made contrary to the principle that within the presidential election period, an outgoing administration must not only act within the administration duty bound to prepare for the orderly transfer of authority to the successor," he said.

Quoting the Supreme Court decision in the case of Aytona v Castillo, he said the outgoing administration during an election period was "enjoined from performing acts that would undermine or obstruct the policies of the successor or negate the successor's successive prerogative to exercise his appointing power."

De Mesa, however, said that "no cannot make a blanket statement that all appointments made on March 10 or immediately prior to March 10 are all null and void or illegal."

He said Malacañang had examined the appointments "and in course tag with "certain categories" to be covered by EO No. 2.

De Mesa said Cabinet officials would be told to conduct an investigation and submit a list of questionable appointments.

He said those whose appointments had been revoked would be "informed accordingly, unless they have already been replaced, or they have voluntarily resigned."

De Mesa said Mr. Aquino had directed Executive Secretary Paquito Ochoa to designate, if necessary, an officer in charge to replace any of the affected appointees.

Immunity

Arroyo, now the representative of the second district of Pampanga, cannot be held liable for making the midnight appointments, according to De Mesa.

"She enjoyed immunity ... during that time," he said, but added: "What's no longer the President, and here as many appointments can be nullified."

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile also said Arroyo would not be liable for making the midnight appointments.

"Because the President, she might have thought she had the power [to appoint]," he said.

Enrile, however, said that with EO No. 2, Mr. Aquino was well within his rights to remove all of his predecessor's midnight appointees, including those with fixed terms.

"That is the right of the President because he is the appointing power. He can remove, reappoint, retain and dismiss people, even those with a term of office, if, in his opinion, [their appointment] are in violation of the prohibition," Enrile said separately.

"If there is an issue, then let the courts decide," he said.

PPSTI appointments

But according to her spokesperson Elena Bautista-Horn, Arroyo did not make any appointments during the prohibited period.

Horn said all of the appointments in question were through the President-Ad Management Staff, which she then headed.

She said it appeared that the Aquino administration made its own interpretation of the Constitution because EO No. 2 showed that appointments in question would only be completed upon the acceptance of the appointees.

"That's their interpretation of the Constitution, and the only body that can interpret the Constitution is the Supreme Court. Not even the President can interpret it," Horn said in person.

Horn also pointed out that under Civil Service rules, no one could be removed without cause.

"That means the employees must have done something not right, or there were issues raised against him, [before he can be removed]," she said, adding that the affected appointees had a "legal recourse."

Horn took the occasion to call on the Aquino administration to further extend the services of nonregular service employees until December, "so that they would be able to get more benefits."

Mr. Aquino recently issued another order extending the services of nonregular service officials and employees until October. With reports from Till C. Cabacungan Jr. and Christine O. Avendaño

Genuinos accused of diverting donated Japan rice for elections

From page A1

Instead of distributing the staple to its intended beneficiaries, close to 1,000 50-kilogram sacks of "first-class" rice were repacked in smaller 10-kilogram bags by a private rice miller in Bifan, Laguna, he said.

The bags, recovered from the Laguna warehouse, were printed with the names and faces of Genuino's sons—Anthony, or "Tot," and Erwin, or "Win."

Santiago said Pagcor employees recently discovered similar rice bags from their local office in Manila.

'The New Face'

"The report we got is that the bags of rice were distributed for the campaign of the Genuinos, but we don't have concrete evidence so far," Santiago told the business. "We're still investigating this. We're trying to gather as much evidence as we could."

The Genuino brothers used the catchphrase "Ang Bagong Mukha (The New Face)" as their political slogan in the May 10 elections.

Despite allegations that he was not a resident of the town, Anthony won the mayoralty race in Los Baños, Laguna.

His brother Erwin, however, lost his mayoral bid in Makati City to Jun-Jun Binay, son of then mayor and now Vice President Jejomar Binay.

Not surprised

Newly designated Bagong Chair Corazon Nagrampa said he was "not surprised" about the diversion.

Two weeks ago, Nagrampa stopped the disbursement of P21 million purportedly meant to pay hazard pay and food packets which the Pagcor was said to have distributed to policemen guarding casinos across the country.

Nagrampa said she was "not yet satisfied" with the explanation.

"Are you really shocked with this? I think we might uncover more [anomalies] as we go along with our job in Pagcor," Nagrampa said over the phone. "There are outside sources who are providing us with information."

Contacted on his mobile phone, Genuino said in Filipino: "It was me who donated the rice to Pagcor. Why would they accuse me of illegally distributing the rice which I actually owned?"

Asked if he had documents to prove this, he replied: "Hindi ko na alam [yan] (I don't know)."

Attempts to 'demonize'

"There's going to demonize me," he said. "You can check the records. You can see that I was instructed in improving the status of Pagcor. In fact, others people say Pagcor, its operations already to 'Genuino.' And where you say Genuino, people think of Pagcor."

Genuino claimed that 18,000 bags of rice, each weighing 30 kilograms, was "donated to me personally" by donor Corp. through the help of his "businessmen friends," he said, was a senior official of the Japanese company.

Owned by Japanese billionaire Kazuo Okada, the gaming firm was awarded by the Pagcor with a contract to build a multimillion peso hotel-resort complex inside the proposed 12-hectare Pagcor Entertainment City on Manila Bay.

Donation for typhoon victims

However, a press release posted on the Pagcor's website clearly stated that the rice shipment was donated by Okada's company to Pagcor.

The news article came out during Genuino's incumbency and featured a photograph of him and then Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro receiving the donation from Okada.

The article said Nexus Corporation chairman Kazuo Okada today turned over 500 metric tons of rice to the Philippine government for distribution among the victims affected by the destructive typhoons that hit the country recently."

A Pagcor employee said Okada's firm imported 18,000 bags of rice from Thailand two years ago upon Genuino's request.

The employee, who asked not to be identified for security reasons, said the shipment was immediately taken to the Pagcor warehouse in Bifan, Cavite, where it arrived from Thailand on July 24, 2008.

Documents from the Pagcor described the commodity as "Thailand white rice, long grain, 100 percent brokens" and that the agency paid almost P1.7 million for the cost of shipment, brokerage, storage and freight services.

Tax evasion

If the former Pagcor chair really owned the shipment, then he must be guilty of tax evasion as he did not pay for the importation of rice," Santiago said.

Upon verbal instructions from Genuino, he said, then corporate communications chief Emilie King ordered the donation of 8,500 bags of rice to the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The rest were kept in the Pagcor rice mill in Cavite were later transferred to the rice depot owned by the National Food Authority, also in Cavite.

On Dec. 23, 2009, the Pagcor official said King again verbally instructed Pagcor employees to bring the rice to a private rice mill in Laguna, which offered to replace the already rotting rice with "fragrant" rice.

Each sack of the well-milled rice was priced at P1,410, the employee said.

"It was like a barter agreement wherein the Pagcor exchanged the donated rice for the good quality rice," he added.

It was there where the "fragrant" rice was repacked into smaller bags before they were supposedly distributed during the campaign of Genuino's sons.

Cherry Hills 11 years later: Still no justice for victims

From page A1

felt the earth moving. There came a loud crash that to some sounded like a bomb explosion. Then the surge of muddy water.

In the wink of an eye, one survivor of that grim night said, rows of houses collapsed, piling one on top of the other.

In one house, a birthday party was going on when the landslide thundered down the hillside. It was just around 9:30 in the evening.

The rains had loosened the earth and caused a cliff to collapse, sending tons of mud cascading on the homes. Eyewitnesses said they saw gushes of muddy water simultaneously erupting along several streets in the subdivision.

Seeking a closure

"I hope that they get what is due them," 37-year-old Andin Ferrer told the business last weekend. "We are lucky we did not lose anyone in our family, but I hope those who did would find closure in the courts."

Ferrer is among the survivors who chose not to file any case against the developers just so—he said—the wife and two children could go back to the subdivision.

Developed by Philippine Japan Solidarity Corp. (Philjas), Cherry Hills Subdivision in Sauyoge has Lulu was meant to be a low-cost housing project.

Even before tragedy struck, a lot of buyers had complained about the developers' supposed failure to complete the project as planned.

In July 1999, a resident filed a retested complaint against Philjas' general manager Hiroshi Ogawa and assistant general manager Eliseo Bolaños for violation of a presidential decree which regulates the sale of subdivision lots and condominiums, and another law which pertains to standards and technical requirements for housing projects.

Moral responsibility

A series of investigations ensued following the tragedy.

An inspection by Mines and Geosciences Bureau found that the community was built in very steep ground and did not have a sufficient drainage system. It also said the area was vulnerable to a total slippage because of a deeply sloping slope to the west.

"The houses were apparently poorly constructed" and some of them reported "did not have the necessary foundation work," it said in a report released days after the tragedy.

Philjas Corp. president Timo Santillan denied the findings. "We believe that nobody could have perceived what happened" on Cherry Hills. No amount of construction techniques could have prevented it. We believe we don't have a legal liability," he said after the report came out.

"But we have a moral responsibility to the priority-right now is to help the families that have been affected," Santillan said.

Senate findings

Philjas later gave each family P15,000, and another P10,000 for those who lost a loved one.

The tragedy prompted a Senate investigation, which concluded that the disaster "was not from nature" as the developers claimed, but a result of the negligence of the developers and of government agencies, which failed to conduct adequate on the construction of low-cost homes.

The Senate report also indicted that the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB), the Antipolo City government and Philjas over responsibility for the disaster.

In December 1999, the Office of the Ombudsman dismissed five housing and environment officials for "gross neglect of duty." It also suspended 13 other housing, environment and Antipolo City officials.

Several residents filed criminal charges before the Antipolo Regional Trial Court against Philjas officials Ogawa, Santillan and Bolaños for incomplete development of the subdivision.

However, the Antipolo City prosecutor's office dismissed the cases, citing lack of basis. This prompted the residents to bring the case to the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Legal battle

Criminal cases were also filed against Philjas officials Ogawa, Santillan, Bodoquez, Alvin Cadag, Tomoyo Lipao and Hyglie Garcia, this time for reckless imprudence resulting in homicide, serious physical injuries and damage to property against Philjas officials Ogawa, Santillan, Bodoquez, Alvin Cadag, Tomoyo Lipao and Hyglie Garcia, this time for reckless imprudence resulting in homicide, serious physical injuries and damage to property.

In August 2001, then Justice Secretary Hernando Perez ordered the filing of criminal information against the developers for failing to complete the subdivision.

But Philjas filed a petition for secretary before the Court of Appeals, arguing that the DOJ—under the HLURB—not the DOJ—which had primary jurisdiction to determine violations of housing and subdivision laws.

In April 2004, Santillan, Bodoquez, Lipao and Garcia pleaded not guilty to charges of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide, while Ogawa had been at large.

In September 2008, the Court of Appeals affirmed the DOJ decision to proceed with the criminal prosecution of the developers.

Not guilty plea

In June 2009, Santillan pleaded not guilty before the Antipolo RTC Branch 74. Judge Mary Josephine Lantoro issued warrants of arrest for Ogawa and Rodriguez, who had also gone at large.

A petition of the case is scheduled for June 6.

The prosecution has presented three witnesses on the charges of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide, serious physical injuries and damage to property against Philjas officials at Antipolo RTC Branch 73. The prosecution is scheduled to present more evidence on Nov. 15.

Still a home

Today, Cherry Hills is still home to those who have stayed despite its tragic past.

"A lot of those who used to reside here have fled to Quezon City, Bulacan, Tanauan and Batangas," said the 39-year-old Ferrer, a Bicolano, whose family is among those who have returned to Cherry Hills.

Ildefonso's house was among the 66 homes that survived the landslide. From his gate, the mass of land where the homes of his neighbors once stood is visible.

'It's hard to forget'

The Ildefonsos appear only were able to survive because they thought an earthquake had struck minutes before the actual landslide hit, and they were already out of the house then.

"I was happy that my daughters and wife were safe and our house was intact. But, of course, I was sad to lose some of my friends."

Ildefonso said those who fled came again the developers were not allowed to come back. Many of those who settled there were with Philjas either sold their houses or just them situation.

"We stayed because it's hard to start all over again. It's hard to forget, but it's not as if we had a choice," Ildefonso said.

Catch Toyota's Biggest Sale at Le Pavillon Tent!

In celebration of its 22nd

year in the country, Toyota Motor Philippines is set to host the **"Toyota Tent Event"** at **Le Pavillon Metropolitan Park, Pasay City from August 3-8, 2010.**

The tent event presents a perfect opportunity for customers to get exclusive offers and packages ranging from huge savings, attractive trade-in deals, and various exciting activities for the entire family.

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Six days of deals, wheels, fun, and entertainment

The Toyota Tent Event is not just about the special deals and offers that are available during the event only, but it is also about fun and entertainment for the whole family.

- Test-drive various Toyota vehicles, including the country's first hybrid car, the Prius.
- Avail of special discounts on genuine Toyota accessories when you purchase on-site.
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Bring your old vehicle to trade in for a new Toyota and get to win up to P20,000 in trade-in certificates.

Get ready to reserve your dream car now and Toyota will offer you more discounts!

You may even get a chance to win a Prius when you buy any Toyota vehicle!

Head on to Le Pavillon now to experience first-hand what a tent event is all about. This super event lasts only from August 3-8, 2010 so make sure you don't miss a single moment of it.

Nightly entertainment for everyone:

- Fireworks display on August 6, 7, 8
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- Jeff's Crib on August 6
- Sugarfree on August 7, to be hosted by Sam Oh
- Nyoy Volante on August 8, to be hosted by Sam Oh

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Meet Palawan's Doc Soc

By Redempto D. Anda
Puerto Princesa City Bureau

I WAS A GEOLOGIST working in the Sierra Madre when the Dumagat people took me to their primitive jungle village to see a sick man. I couldn't change the fate of that man but he changed mine."

ADDICTED

Dr. Jun Antonio Socorro, arguably one of the country's best orthopedic surgeons apart from being a licensed geologist, was a guest in a Palawan radio program early this week, talking about his current work with the disabled and narrating the story of how he had established his medical practice in a rural district after a long stint of training in America and Europe over a decade ago.

The radio host blared during the show that he had to be content over 400 text messages sent by listeners all over the province, mostly from those whose lives he had touched.

"One particular caller was suggesting that Doc Soc should be nominated for sainthood," Irany Ortega, the host of Bombo Palawan radio, excitedly said.

While many Filipino specialists struggle to establish a financially rewarding medical practice abroad, Doc Soc, as he is called homebound, flaunted practice in the United States and Europe to pursue a lifelong dream: to do so in rural Palawan.

Brain Gain

Socorro was a licensed geologist when he decided to take up medicine at the University of the Philippines. During his second year of medicine, he was forced by the political turmoil to leave the country and seek further medical studies in the United States and Europe.

"I was a DOG (doctor of medicine and geology) after I graduated from UP but my wife and I had to flee the Marcos dictatorship and I became an ASO (aspirant of surgery overseas)," he said.

His proficiencies with aerospaces was epitomized in the places where he held offices. When he was designated health officer for Palawan several years ago, the sign on his office door merely stated "Sarkuful." Overland to ask an insider to find out that it meant "Secretary finding us fabulous jobs."

Practicing orthopedics, he is for last in the list if there is even one.

In the 15 years he was overseas, Doc Soc studied up an impressive resume—the only Filipino fellow of Royal College of Surgeons and British Orthopedic Association; a graduate of University of Kentucky Medical Center general surgical residency program; a Shalom scholar in plastic surgery in Israel; a specialist in neurosciences from Cambridge University and in orthopedics at Suffolk's Ipswich Hospital in England.

His most exciting accomplishment to date is his being a recipient of the prestigious Sasakawa-Health Prize in 2007, which was conferred by World Health Organization, for outstanding work in the field of rural medicine. The prize is given once a year to an individual or institution deemed from a thousand nominees from all over the world.

Against the grain

Doc Soc operates on a mind-set many people may call crazy. But only that he hates wearing leather shoes and wears around in flip-flops during formal functions. He never changes patients, including the rich, for his services. Often, the cathedrals center that he created, Bahaisala (Bahay ng Maysala Lahat) would even extend financial services to needy patients.

While in the United States and utilized his knowledge, his relatives there had succeeded in securing his US residency status. "See I was so glad that I had it immediately revoked."

"My life abroad was always geared toward coming home and I knew that here in Palawan I will have patients who cannot pay me. I cannot sustain myself by making a living out of medical practice," he told the hotpress.

Fundraising

To sustain his medical practice without having to charge patients, he birthed an idea to create "my own funding agency."

Fundraising on a bi-annual-cause approach of taking money from friends and charitable institutions, he said that, at one point, he had written 60,000 letters of solicitation. With patience and perseverance, he had hit pay dirt and raised just enough to establish a foundation, British Palawan Trust.

Bahaisala, now a 30-bed orthopedic unit adjacent to Palawan Provincial Hospital, is a busy hub open to all, mainly poor patients.

"The British Palawan Trust allowed me to practice in the classical medical way without having to think how much to charge my patients," he said.

A plaintiff of concerns

On the side, Doc Soc is sometimes by a cornucopia of nonmedical concerns and advocacies, churning out unsolicited opinions and policy papers on a wide range of issues and disbursing them personally to government officers and friends.

He is a force-liner to a civic concerns matching organizations

DR. JUN Antonio Socorro treats both poor and rich patients for free.

quietly named Kilusang Love Mahanguna (you guessed right, he coined it) to monitor perceived abuses by politicians on the use of royalty shares of Palawan from the Malampaya natural gas project, offshore north of the province.

At present, he is embroiled in a spat with the administration of the provincial hospital over the destruction of centuries-old mania trees to pave the way for a building.

In one issue, he launched a public crusade against a big beef in Puerto Princesa City for refusal to admit little because he wore slippers instead of shoes during a public function.

Doc Soc describes himself as "a one-pure-somebody," which meant he was not paid any perhonored for when his services as a geologist was tapped by the provincial government to argue its case in Congress and in Malacañang about a territorial dispute between the national government over the Malampaya gas reserves.

Palawan Bishop Pedro Arigo describes Doc Soc as "an ordinary footmost of someone who had really dedicated himself to the poor and the needy."

In the context of Doc Soc's lifestyle and work ethic, to which going to Sunday Mass is nowhere in his schedule or vocation, it was almost strange to find him having an influential Catholic bishop for a friend and ally. "I know he doesn't attend the Holy Mass and I wish he does but he has his life as a true Christian, especially with his work among the poor," the bishop said.

With Patrick Ibiswan Tran gaining more devotes, Doc Soc has embarked on an ambitious plan to expand his services to providing hospital and rosebox-proud-based free orthopedic services.

Central to this is his engagement with the disabled sector through a program which he recently named "Pag-ng Palawan," which stands for Prosthesis for Ambulating Again.

"I am getting old and one day I will be just another DOC (dead old geologist)," he quipped.

Namumuhay sa Smokey Mountain, Gabay ng Pananampalataya

It's a continuing story of strife and joy, of struggle and relief, at Smokey Mountain. But underlying this is an unfolding work on rallying people at the grassroots toward environment sustainability and regaining of the will of God for its people and for the planet.

This work now progresses more vigorously and rests on the **13-0** decision of the Supreme Court in 2007 which upheld the validity, legality and constitutionality of the Smokey Mountain Reclamation and Development Project.

With groundwork initiated by Father **Ben Beltran**, SVD, among the prayerful residents of Smokey Mountain, faith-based green projects and livelihood programs have evolved into the **Tondo Millennium Challenge** (TMC), a flagship project of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Secretariat of the SVD Central Provinces.

TMC, of which the former Smokey Mountain parish priest is coordinator, seeks to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals for Tondo by 2015, in line with the vision of the Archdiocese of Manila—toward fullness of life.

Smokey Mountain residents earnestly join the initiatives through groups like The **Children of Mother Earth**, a group of children and teenagers who were trained as performing artists, and the Likas Kayang Kaunlaran (Education for Sustainable Development). Their activities also help raise funds for their continued education.

To quote the words of the late Jaime Cardinal Sin, upon witnessing these the Smokey Mountain dwellers' transfer to their new shelter,

"It is a miracle."

'Panatag na buhay, 'di paninira ang kailangan'

Ito ang sagot ng taong bayan kontra sa BALUKTOT NA RASON sa likod ng paninira sa Smokey Mountain Project

Monopolists, who want to retain control of the Philippine port industry, seek to cancel the Smokey Mountain Project at all costs despite the final proclamation of the Supreme Court on the project's legality and constitutionality.

Port monopolists want to declare as illegal the Smokey Mountain Project because Harbour Center Port Terminal land is part of the Smokey Mountain Project land.

Cancelling the Project shall mean the cancellation of the Harbour Center Port Terminal Inc. (HCPTI) or the cancellation of the emerging competition in this port industry which has long been locked over by this monopoly.

They want to eliminate competition so that current high rates for transport and handling cost can remain. No competition means higher rates and higher profits for them, much to the disadvantage of the public.

HCPTI is a port operator now at the North Harbor. The reasonableness that HCPTI is undertaking at this port of Manila makes it the most promising, progressive and technologically advanced in the industry, controlling 60 to 70 percent of the market.

Detractors believe that striking at the Smokey Mountain Project would destroy the Harbour Center which now poses a grave threat to this half-century-old monopoly at the Philippine ports.

ITO ANG TUNAY NA RASON

After losing their case in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals and other courts of justice, these people who want monopoly of the ports to remain, were quick to dishonor the courts and are again taking trial.

WHERE SOBER REASONING FAILS, ALOSERTS RESORT IS TO THROW IRRESPONSIBLE ACCUSATIONAL SHEK MEDIA PUBLICITY AND CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION.

A CIVILIZED SOCIETY RESPECTS THE RULE OF LAW. MEN WHO IGNORE THE PROCESSES OF LAW HAVE NO PLACE IN THE QUEST FOR PROGRESS, ORDER AND DECENCY.

"To bring the poor to the future of a globalized economy, we have to equip them now with knowledge and skills. Now, the Supreme Court decision has unleashed a wave of opportunities for our projects here at Smokey Mountain."

-Fr. Ben Beltran, SVD

Antonio Lino 'Tony' Bergonia

Across the NATION

Gov't may have lost up to P9B in STL

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Small town lottery (STL) agents of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) may be shortchanging the national and local governments of income by underreporting their daily sales.

Based on the sales reports of its agents, the national and local governments could have lost up to P9 billion in taxes and shares from January to June, according to figures obtained from an Inquirer affidavit in the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO), who declined to be identified for not having been authorized to speak on the matter.

The possibility of income losses in Batangas, Nueva Ecija, Bataan, Bulacan and Pampanga came up as computers operating STL in those areas reported sales that ranged from only 3 to 7 percent of monthly sales.

The bulk of the bets, which were not included in official sales reports, are suspected to have been added to the outlets of "jueteng" operators, who supposedly use the legal game as a front.

As franchise holder of the game, the PCSO began STL in February 2006 to fight the illegal numbers game jueteng, by using almost all the features of STL and absorbing jueteng employees.

There are now 22,593 agents in scattered parts of the country.

According to the PCSO mayor's report, the enhanced technology system in Batangas reported sales of P624,15,562 during the six-month period, representing 5 percent of the PCSO estimate sales of P1.44 billion for the same period.

The CITI Prime Venture Inc. in Nueva Ecija made P98,357,000 in profits, representing 5 percent of the expected P1.8 billion sales.

Lubo Tahvo Gaming and Amusements Corp. in Angeles City netted P30,996,427, representing 3 percent of the estimated sale of P949,000,000.

Sicuro Bay Research and Marketing Corp. declared sales of P37,247,151 or 4 percent of the expected income of P1.26 billion.

Diamond Gaming and Research Center Corp. in Bulacan took in sales worth P303,027,855, representing 7 percent of the projected P1.44 billion in sales.

SunCove Corp. in Pampanga reported sales of P137,324,562 or 4 percent of the expected P3.06 billion in sales.

The PCSO board in resolutions on the amounts of bets that are regularly wagered in each of the three classes daily and number of villages is to use.

It was reviewing the sales reports of all its 22 agents, according to its spokesperson, Larry Cotta.

Bernadette Quilantes, PCSO HR project manager, could not be reached for comment.

A few days before assuming the interior and local government post, Secretary Jesse Robredo had asked the PCSO to remove STL operations and policies.

It is difficult to monitor STL sales because the lottery does not use official receipts.

In February 2009, the PCSO defended STL operations, saying it had P4.499 billion in gross sales from 2006 to 2008.

From STL proceeds as of February 2009, the PCSO remitted 5 percent (P241.9 million) in taxes to the Bureau of Internal Revenue and gave 30 percent (P1.3 billion) in charity.

Of the charity funds, 30 percent (P446.2 million) went to city or town governments, 25 percent (P371.6 million) to congressional districts and 5 percent (223.1 million) to provincial governments.

The Philippine National Police received 5 percent.

A BFP points to the area of the Naga City boarding house where two women died in a fire on Tuesday. Ariel U. Dayupay (INQUIRER.NET PHOTO)

RP general on rowdy GIs: What's the fuss?

ZAMBOANGA CITY—A top Philippine military official here dismissed reports of abusive behavior by US soldiers, saying the Americans didn't violate any Philippine law and had been punished by their officers for misdeeds.

Lt. Gen. Ben Dolor Ilao, Western Mindanao Command chief, said two cases of misdemeanors by the American have been investigated and were found to be results of "simple altercation and miscommunication."

One case, which occurred on July 19, involved the refusal of US troops to stop during a flag retreat ceremony at the Naval Forces Western Mindanao Command headquarters here.

Several Filipino soldiers said the American showed disrespect toward the Philippine flag and national anthem.

On July 3, a number of American soldiers clambered up a stage at the First Marine Brigade Headquarters where a band was playing and sexually harassed the band's female singer.

Dolorilao said the July 3 incident was "purely an altercation" between Filipino Marines and the US soldiers, "who were greatly intoxicated."

The US soldiers had been invited to a party by the Marines who were celebrating their unit's anniversary.

Dolorilao said authorities conducted an "intensive investigation" and found that no abuse was committed by the US soldiers.

"I request our partners in the media to correct that earlier report pertaining to molestation of a female zumba singer and that is her request, too," Dolorilao said.

But an Inquirer informant, who witnessed the July 3 incident, said reports made by the Western Mindanao Command and the JSOTF (Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines) are erroneous.

"The higher commanders should admit there was abuse. They should not cover for the American soldiers," the informant said. Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

4 dead in Naga, Bacolod fires

FOUR PERSONS died in separate fires in Naga City and Bacolod City early this week.

In Naga, two women were trapped in a two-hour fire that destroyed a boarding house on Peñafrancia Avenue on Tuesday. Their bodies were charred beyond recognition after being found inside rubble.

BFP/Lt. Juan Victor Brito identified the two women as Aida Arcito, 66, and Ma. Clarissa Reta, 39.

Reta was a graduating midwifery student, while Arcito was a retiree and childless widow, according to Alwin Unson, 34, another occupant of the house and grandson of the boarding house owners.

Unson said the two heckles failed from Danger, Camarines Sur.

Chief Insp. Achilles Saenings, head of the city fire department, said it took other household members some 20 minutes before they were able to alert the fire department.

In Bacolod City, a man and a teenager died in a fire that destroyed a two-story house on Monday.

Insp. Pedrito Pleteos, deputy city fire marshal, identified the fatalities as Philip Martinez, 34, and Adrian Morris, 12, both of Barangay Sum-in Bacolod.

Firefighters said the fire originated from the room of the casualties and was caused by a lit cigarette.

Leslie Tibon, 30, house owner said Martinez had drinks with relatives shortly before the fire.

Wilma Morris, mother of Adrian, said she last saw her son in town of Monday when she gave him money to buy a T-shirt for a school activity.

Adrian is a Grade 5 pupil at the Sum-in Elementary School and runs errands for Silvosa, the house owner. Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon and Carla Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

BIR trains sights on Davao Chinatown

DAVAO CITY—The Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) here is training its sights on the city's Chinatown in its campaign against tax evaders.

Noel Gonzalez, revenue district officer of BIR West Davao, said some retailers at Chinatown are practicing a scheme where they contract buyers who will distribute goods to retail in dealers.

The distributor, however, do not issue receipts. Similarly, the dealers distribute the goods to retail stores, also without issuing receipts.

"There is no collection of the 12 percent VAT (value-added tax) of the goods from the distributors to the dealers, and dealers to the stores, because they are not issuing the required receipts," Gonzalez said.

Also under the Oplan Kandado drive, the BIR confiscated questionable cash register machines, one of which has keys with Chinese characters.

Gonzalez said stores using similar cash register machines have been placed under surveillance. Judy Quirve, Inquirer Mindanao

INQUIRER

OPINION

How far we've come

PRESIDENT AQUINO'S speech at the 66th anniversary celebration of GMA Network last week is said to have thrilled the celebrants. As well it should, and all the other media outfits that had tangled in ways big and small with the previous administration that, significantly, stepped down with the proposed Freedom of Information Act remaining in the House of Representatives.

EDITORIAL Mr. Aquino congratulated UMA-TV for its soaring power; during the dark and dangerous years of martial law, he said, it "persisted in keeping the public informed despite the risks of censorship" and "kept the flickering light of truth alive." He also lauded it as the only TV station that covered the assassination of his father, Benigno Aquino Jr., then returning from exile on Aug. 21, 1983, and the subsequent wake and funeral that galvanized the smoldering resistance to the Marcos dictatorship.

"I'm not just a viewer. As your President, I am your partner," Mr. Aquino said. "This administration will defend your right to free expression. This administration will accept criticism from you."

It was a soothing declaration from the man who, early on in his fledgling administration, displayed an irritable nature and a capacity for public discourse. (Some say he talks too much; we say, keeping mum behind a cold stare is infinitely worse.) It was also something that his base, the rest of the media, and even the public at large needed to hear, after the experience of a past dispensation that employed both creative and crude ways to evade and parry (for example, Jose Miguel Arroyo's oath of libel suits against journalists) and to dissemble and bedevil (Executive Order No. 464, say, which required the then President's permission for certain officials to testify at congressional inquiries).

In inviting his specific audience to "be part of this difficult but worthwhile journey of turning our country around," Mr. Aquino enlisted its help to accurately portraying the state of the nation and what his constituency could do to share the burden in the next six years. The invitation, necessarily extended to journalists in general, partakes of his simple yet consistently powerful message—that he derives his strength from the people he serves, and that ultimately everyone is in this together.

But to achieve the goal of preserving an accurate picture of the nation's state of affairs in order to right the wrongs that hobble its progress, journalists will be greatly empowered by the passage of the Freedom of Information Act. Intended to promote transparency and good governance, it requires all government officials to make public all state records as well as their own statements of assets, liabilities and net worth, particularly when public interest demands it.

The bill, all of nine years old and requiring only ratification before being submitted to the then President for signature, was effectively knocked out by her allies in the House on its last session day on June 6, with then Speaker Prospero Nograles yielding to Camiguin Rep. Pedro Bernaldo's question on the purported absence of a quorum and adjourning the session.

It is incumbent on concerned lawmakers to sponsor the bill and get the endless process going again.

In his speech, Mr. Aquino mentioned the media's "right and obligation to encourage public discourse." He gained the hope that this discourse would lead to consensus and closure to action, the kind that leaders desire but is extremely difficult to attain. His remarks, at once bold and encouraging, allow for his commissioner to name the name hope without being forced into the sham consensus of conformity that marks oppressive regimes.

The South African writer Nadine Gordimer famously described freedom of expression as "the oxygen of our creativity." Her compatriot, poet Mongane Wally Serote, wrote that writers want "page for wisdom through the stubborn night," that dreadful night being politically motivated censorship.

We've endured one dictatorship and a regime that is said to have toyed with the idea of another. If this President now promises to defend journalists' and writers' right to free expression, think of how far we've come. We will gratefully take him at his word and constantly hold him to it.

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The promise of closure

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

THE RECENTLY SIGNED executive order creating a special body to investigate scandalous cases of graft and corruption committed during the presidency of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo is finally out. Last July 30, a full month after he took office, President Aquino issued Executive Order No. 1 establishing "The Truth Commission of 2010." In an instant, Arroyo's allies seemed by questioning the legality of the order, calling it a usurpation of institutional functions. They charged that an executive body like this cannot be created by mere executive fiat. The President, they warned, should ask Congress to pass a law.

I find it odd that these critics found nothing constitutionally objectionable in Administrative Order No. 78, issued by then President Arroyo on July 30, 2005, creating the "Solicitor Fact Finding Commission" to investigate the so-called Hello-Garci scandal and the causes of military grievances. Or Administrative Order No. 127, issued on Aug. 21, 2006, creating the "Melo Fact-Finding Commission" to look into the killings of media workers and activists. Not one of these actions required merging a big, ministries function or of creating a redundant body.

Just to drive home the point: Don't both houses of Congress routinely launch investigations and hearings "in aid of legislation," which often end up adversely being investigated by other government agencies? In all such instances, they do not seem to mind that previous public funds and resources are committed in these investigations.

In fact, EO No. 1 springs no surprises. I don't understand why it took so long to write it. Calling through the workings, one finds that the so-called "Truth Commission of 2010" is basically a fact-finding body that is no different from other special commissions created by past administrations. Its primary task is "to conduct a thorough fact-finding investigation of reported cases of graft and corruption... during the previous administration and [here after recommend the appropriate action or measure to be taken...." I find nothing illegal, or extraordinary in or complex in this order that would warrant judicial intervention. The only difference I can see is that whereas the Feliciano and Melo commissions were created by an administrative order (AO), it took an executive order (EO) to create the Davis Commission of 2010. I've read the Administrative Code, but, I have to admit, I don't understand where the substantial distinction between an AO and an EO lies.

It goes without saying that such a commission can be created by Congress as well. The first Davide Commission of 1987, mandated to investigate the failed coup of December 1989 and to recommend measures to prevent military adventurism, was initially authorized by AO 146. An act of Congress, RA 6832, subsequently affirmed its creation. Nothing stops Congress, if it is so minded, from doing the same with respect to the Truth Commission of 2010.

But, President Aquino has opted not to rely on Congress to pass such a law. People who have searched how Congress operates would easily understand why. Given the present political system, perhaps the best way to kill any reform initiative is to submit it to Congress.

So we need a truth commission to find out what really happened in the many controversial cases involving the Arroyo presidency that were left unresolved because political pressure was used to suppress the necessary inquiries. That is the main point. The decision to create one is certainly political, but that is not something to apologize for. It is one of the campaign promises of the new President, and many are happy to see that he seems determined to keep his promises. President Aquino is clearly prepared to make the legitimacy of his presidency on the cornerstone of this decision. Let those who oppose him on this also challenge it in Congress and in the public arena.

Is the President evading the public police currently? Or is this mere nothing but a manifestation of a divisive triumphalist streak? As a student of politics, I am fully aware that a honeymoon is expected to be, the nearer and local point of political integration. In this role, he must leave behind the antagonism of the electoral campaign and begin to harness the collective will and power of the nation in order to achieve long-term national prosperity and stability that, the reality is that, to be able to do this, he must help our people overcome their skepticism about government so they can be active partners in the country's development. Over the years, our people have become indifferent to the demands of citizenship. They demand answers to questions that their leaders tend to turn once they are in power. That is what a truth commission is for.

The commission will have fulfilled its mandate if, at the end of its work, it is able to provide straightforward accounts of what happened in at least three crucial cases: (1) the "Hello, Garci" scandal and allegations of cheating in the 2004 presidential election, (2) the use of fertilizer funds in Arroyo's 2004 campaign, and (3) the NBN-ZTE deal.

Such accounts, I think, will go a long way in producing what Filipinos call "closure." The issue we give to this word is not easy for those who it means in psychology: "the state of experiencing an emotional conclusion to a difficult life event." For us, closure is being able to gain enough understanding of what really happened in the past to be able to move forward (efficiency is that we may regain the capacity to trust our leaders and thus, to hope once more.

public.lives@gmail.com

Ako rin

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THERE'S SOMETHING P-Noy has done since he became president that's just as pioneering as not using swear words. That is delivering his major speeches in Filipino. Or in the Cebuano and Ilocano will probably insist, in Tagalog.

Or so in his major speeches, where he addresses the nation at large. He continues to address other groups in English, or Taglish, where it is convenient. He spoke in English at La Salle Green Hills during the first church anniversary of his mother, Cory, but he spoke in Filipino at the Rizal Park during his inauguration and at the Batasan during his State. He didn't just use a smattering of Filipino, which has been the style of past presidents in inauguration and Sonas. He spoke in Filipino from beginning to end.

Surprisingly a minor thing, like not using swear words, it is in fact just as major. Investing in a trivial thing, like wearing ordinary clothes outside of work, like having simple meals, like being accessible to the public. It is indeed just as all-important. It is all of a piece with being one of the people. It is all of a piece with being one with the people.

It's a brilliant idea, one that clearly didn't come from P-Noy's advisers, most of whom think in English, write in English and speak in English. I understand it has wreaked havoc among his communications people who have to scramble to produce speeches in Filipino. That is P-Noy's own personal preference. That is P-Noy's own presidential imperative.

It is by no means completely original. The first one to do it was Erap during his inauguration. He came directly at the top before Bonifacio Church which birthed the first Philippine Congress, a short-lived legislative body but one that captured the fledgling nation's dreams of becoming a true republic. It was particularly fitting coming, as it did, only weeks after the centennial of Independence. Erap capped it all by speaking in Filipino, something his predecessors hadn't done, except by way of token passages in that language. His speech was magnificent, particularly where he got to the part about "sailing between raging winds, seeking true landfall" in capsule form the nation's journey of the past 100 years.

Some things are simply better said in Filipino—or the other local languages. I know that first hand because the one column I wrote that became the nation's most read opinion piece last year (I got 10 out of 10, two more to Filipinos) was "May araw ako kayo." I was motivated by that because while I know that Filipinos had made tremendous inroads in spoken form [no major network broadcasts news in English anymore], it hasn't in written form. That is not where it captures something deeply felt. Filipinos are willing to read in earnest.

That column was an expostulation against the humiliating smearing tactics of the previous regime as shown by the extravagance of Ilocos. The only way I thought I could explain my homesick was in Filipino. My audience obviously thought so, too.

P-Noy's Inaugural Speech drives home the point. The official translation by P-Noy's media bureau of it reads in part, "Never can ever been ignored by the very government you helped put in power? I have. I have you had to endure indignities. I will not allow to the abuse of taxpayers of those who love to display their good times and power over you? I have, too. I have you experienced exasperation and anger at a government that instead of serving you, needs to be reminded by you? Ibahan I.

The original in Filipino reads: "Kayo ba ay minsan ang nalimutan ng pamahalaang inyong inihalal sa pwesto? Ako rin. Kayo ba ay nagtiis ng sa mga mga pero ang hamagsigaw ng isang mayhabol bayang di-mapagsing si bahala? Ako rin. Kayo ba ay umang ang sa sa pamahalang sa pilit ang pagpapasunod ng bata sa mga? Ako rin."

Ask yourself which one doesn't just capture the idea of oppression but the dire reality of oppression. Ask yourself which one doesn't just convey the need to change things but the urgency the lack, the urge to change things. Ask yourself which one doesn't just make you think he is one of you but makes you feel he is one of you.

You say the second?

Ako rin.

Awed by octogenarians

MAYBE IT'S because another year is passing this month for me, but I can't but be awed by some people who are decades older than me: Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, 86, former President Fidel V. Ramos, 84, and Sen. Joker P. Arroyo, 82. These octogenarians are the living Filipinos I admire most, and to put myself on a child's equivalent (revised for my age of 56): I'd like to be like them when I grow up in my 80s. They certainly inspire me to look forward to my coming decades. I hope our new generation of leaders will emulate their just values and political wisdom.

As an appetizer, I'll post-click quotes of their remaining years. Betting over their grandchildren's names, just writing it out in a Golden Acres kind of place, these three are still playing major roles in our national life and direction, still interested over the future of our nation. The term former had to fall back on Enrile to be the senior president against overall's punishing squabble in the chamber. Nipping just published his 4th compilation of his politico-economic essays. Arroyo hasn't lost his super-sharp, pro-civil, mode of criticizing government policies.

Active octogenarians are certainly a deviation from normal humanity. My three heroes, however, are not unique. Former Chief Justice Roberto Concepcion died at 95; Benjamin Franklin passed the US Constitutional Convention at 81; Goethe at 83 wrote "Faust"; and Winston Churchill turned 80 during his second term as UK's prime minister.

The lives of our three octogenarians become interwoven during the Marcos years. First, Joker against the two pillars of martial law, Enrile and Ramos; the trio united in the People Power Revolution; then Ramos and Joker against Enrile in the mutinous Cory years; and now, the three, I dare propose, are forming the pillars of political

OUTLOOK

Rigoberto Tiglao

stability in his era.

Just a decade ago, I would have been the last person to write a paean for Enrile and Ramos. I was for three decades a personal foe of both of them. Why shouldn't I? A memento I keep to a lot is 1973 (a martial law administrator Enrile to my balled denying our request to free me and my late wife Raquel from a military prison. Gross, quoted): I spent two years of my life jailed in an army camp. The chief of the Philippine Constabulary, Ramos, had command responsibility over the infamous 5th Constabulary Security Unit. That dreaded death unit jailed me and my wife—with my two-year-old daughter Andrea in tow—together with most of the Communist Party of the Philippines' Manila chapter. Ramos' 5SCU specialized in torture, including Bonito Tiamzon, now the alleged CPP chair, his wife Nilasa and three others who were on to become Politburo members. The torture inflicted by the 5th CSU only served to inflame our revolutionary fervor for years...and ultimately for Tiamzon another comrade, until now.

But we considered it a mercy: It was either all, a war, and communist children Ana Maria Sison indeed called it a "People's War." In any war, true and hatred does not from the heaven of men the most primeval, brutal instincts.

Arroyo was a radical young Makabayan lawyer, led by the late Jose W. Diokno, that included a lawyer barely out of law school, Jejomar Binay. They first badly represented opposition leaders and activists who were formally charged in the first and hopefully last military tribunals in our country.

However, the energy of Enrile, Ramos and Ar

royo in their 40s only reflects their playfulness when they were in their 20s. As they moved into adulthood, family, Ramos and drama, each in his own way, strived to create the lives they were meant, and not just what was presented to them. Most dramatic was for his life, with the post-life attempt, epic personality his birthright—and limits for his college and law education—from his rich father. Each of them didn't really seek heroism, but simply stuck to humanity's dreamlined principles in their understood it, when events demanded a response: for Arroyo, martial law's 1972 and Cory's presidency; and for all three, the 1986 People Power Revolution.

All three didn't—and don't—see the world and Philippine politics in the Manichean mind-set that a fashionable these days among a few politicians and columnists decades younger than these who have hardly been around to witness the rise of North and to never instantaneous into nationhood.

I admire in the three for having a life of the mind, a predilection that I fear is fast vanishing among our leaders. When I visited Enrile in 2005 at his Senate office, he was reading a book on Hannah Arendt. Ramos and Arroyo's Forum for Peace and Development Foundation is a real think tank. Its office becoming a library of studies on economic development. In Africa two years ago when he visited with his family, Arroyo was like a little boy in the archaeological museum, awed by the relics of ancient civilizations.

Perhaps I admire these three non-saints most for having their personal lives to the fullest, never forgetting that there is life outside and beyond politics. Now what could be nobler than that?

E-mail: tiglao.inquirer@gmail.com

Death to car thieves

A WICKED SMILE forms on my lips and a nasty glint appears in my soul whenever there's news of car thieves and carjackers, and their ilk—hostile brain boil—getting instead down in a bloody pulp battle with law enforcers. I feel like shouting, "Bad luck to a thief in your pants, for this car you stole from me."

And I think of a photo taken years ago that drives me screaming are mostly while sipping a .45 and firing to a target. I did quite well for that was the first and last time I shot a gun in my life. Strange, I am not gun crazy but my mind does a Dirty Harry when I think of the terrible that instance and—

And only not. I was a victim. That was way back in Dec. 2002, but I still never forget the day, the shock, the rage, the feeling of helplessness. Who said journalists aren't supposed to feel help-less in that kind of situation? It's really a night-mare to be robbed of your car. You wake up and wake up in the morning and find your car on the driveway. But no, I found myself in the police station and almost immediately doing the paper test so that the vehicle could be tracked down, and I am on that I made my application of non-ownership and make-innocence claim.

As they say, the sweet part was work on the insurance, the money you get over it. I had a new car in 30 days because I was only covered for "theft" a car-and-two a few weeks after my car was stolen and the insurance paid me right away. It could have taken longer but the head of the Traffic Management Group at that time was also a car nut, so I knew he would move heaven and earth to get my car.

I became such an expert on the subject of car theft that I ended up writing a long three-part series (with interviews and all) for the Manila Bulletin at the behest of the late Joe Taruc, the editor, the others, the others. But what was not yet in practice then among car thieves was the use of sexy young women as spotters and social networking in the Internet such as Facebook or Twitter to get the lay of the land. Or the land of the future away and led to their capture and the death of one of them, Ivan Padilla.

And so with the latest news headline on the al-

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

leged leader of a carjack syndicate gunned down at the right age of 23—Padilla, that is—many car owners who lost their cars or knows should be rejoicing. But this guy couldn't have been one of those who stole my car. Padilla in 2002 he was only 15 years old. But he has associates and they must still be alive.

There are several ways to lose a car. The police have codes for them. OMP means "stolen while abandoned" (when the thief's car breaks down and he wakes up in the morning and finds your car on the driveway, but no, I haven't met it the police station and almost immediately doing the paper test so that the vehicle could be tracked down, and I am on that I made my application of non-ownership and make-innocence claim.

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And so with the latest news headline on the alle

Could GMA bear and take it?

LETTERS

BEE GOMEZ: Macapagal-Arroyo has introduced a first in the annals of our country's political history. Only time is to bad precedent. From being the president, the most powerful person in the country, she did down to congressman. In the annals of propriety and good taste, this should never have happened.

A year ago or so, GMA and a number of her closest allies landed a plum for her to run for a congressional seat representing a district in her home province of Pampanga, never mind if it made sense whatsoever or was left of her dignity. Ease of viewing—what with millions of pesos having been earmarked for her district—they thought of installing her speaker of the House of Representatives. Sending a co-equal branch of government after occupying the highest office in the land would not look like a demotion after all. At the head of a body armed with the power to impeach, she could deal lethal blows to whoever dared to "touch" her, including her successor. With her successor incarcerated like a scared dog, she can then lead the monolithic House to do her own bidding. Attending the Convention to be able to grow herself another time as the highest office (presidency or premier-ship) was one of them. I think she'd then have their arms and legs tied beneath behind, there to call God.

To many, the sight of a former president standing on equal footing with other members of the House of Representatives is pathetic. This is made worse by her once rabid supporters now singing paeans to the new czar in the House.

Well, GMA may have been assigned a spanking office in the House as a show of support for her previous master, but it would be presidential like a haunted room, what would she have? No, GMA could find herself in a lot of embarrassing situations in the days she is in Congress. The questions vs. Cox the tabs and hear it? She would then have gone through all this for ambitions if she had only chosen to ride in on the senate and then gently join the night.

—ITZ B PEÑALOZA, Subic Bay Freeport Zone, tolpenalber@ymail.com

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4782, 897-4794, or e-mail's address/author.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Angarrayo: GMA's Senate rear guards vs. P-Noy

TWO SENATORS, Sen. Edgardo Angara and Sen. Juliet Ocampo, have unmasked themselves as the Senate rear guards of the past Arroyo administration. They wrecked their own cohort by objecting to President Aquino's fast action directing the Department of Justice to review the coup d'etat case against Sen. Antonio Trillanes.

One recollection is that it was Gloria Macapagal Arroyo who precipitated the preparation of the case against Trillanes in the aftermath of the Oakwood incident, which violated the aegis of effective civil mutiny to corruption under the former. Seven of the Philippines. The DOJ, headed at the time by GMA's attack dog Raul Gonzalez, unprecedented were obviously and even after Trillanes. But the Filipino people vindicated Trillanes by electing him senator in the same 2007 elections which exercised Angarrayo to the Senate along with the Magsaysay-ness senator, Sen. Miguel Zubiri.

With a new presidency in Pinoy it is more appropriate for the DOJ to review the Trillanes case, especially since Trillanes has been duly elected as senator and, as a public servant, can probably do a better job than the other senators. Since Pinoy ordered only the DOJ, a department in the Executive, I can't see how he could have encroached on the territories or powers of the members and legislature.

A case review implies neither a P-boy or the Senate. It merely means we relax have unwanted the persecution of many good officers for upholding our against corruption to the 07 the Garci electoral fraud and such killings as the Ampatuan massacre—all of which have not allowed to be committed during the rest of the Angarrayo presidency. It seems to us that as Senate rear guards, the Angarrayos unduly is concerned with such problem.

The DOJ should not leave to two disgraced senators who are the same stepping out of bounds by issuing warnings to the DOJ about obeying Pinoy's instructions. Indeed, it may be instructive for all to watch—hands which other senators and the rest of Congress have been off. Congress have been left as rear guards of the evil GMA worldview.

—JOSE CRUZ, jcruz@pmail.com

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Bacani's GSIS claim backed by documents

I AM aghast at the nonsensical reason given by the GSIS for disapproving Rene C. Bacani's application to change her mode of retirement.

What would bother you that a registered pension-plan owner, who paid GSIS astronomically premiums for 30 years, would decide to retire and not "specifically applied for a mode of retirement which would allow her to get a full refund of personal premium contributions paid with interest"?

That is exactly what GSIS' Rita Villanueva-Ong said of retiree Bacani (Inquirer, 7/30/'10). It was Bacani's fault that she received only P66,604.01, the return of her premium payment plus interest. We get what we apply for, no what the law says you are entitled to receive.

But Bacani did not even apply to be retired under Sec. 11(a) of RA 8291. Her documented proof of GSIS' claim that she did, GSIS can't produce any until now.

The facts: Bacani sent a letter (July 16, 1998) requesting early retirement under RA 8291, Under Sec. 12(b) of RA 8291, members may retire at any age after 30 years of service with lifetime monthly annuity benefit. But Bacani was required to accomplish the official retirement application form which did not include Sec. 11(a). She was invited to apply under Sec. 12(b) for gratuity benefits available to those who served for at least 20 years. This area manager Nanette Celestio confirmed in writing at also applicable to Bacani.

The application under Sec. 11(a) was disapproved for the reason that Bacani was more than 60 years old at the time of application and was found to be not wholly and permanently disabled, as per letter (Sept. 22, 1998) of Fernando T. Lapiz.

No other applications, except to correct her mode of retirement to Sec. 12(b), were filed by Bacani. She even the application to change her mode of retirement was disapproved for the reason that her option to change had expired after one year.

But there were Bacanis staff reported his findings to Regional Manager Pilma F. Bhoreal, copy of which was furnished me, as follows: "Record shows that Mrs. Bacani filed a request for correction less than a month from receipt of the refund of her retirement premiums."

All the above are comments of lies appeared by certified true copies of records of GSIS in my possession.

We now request the new president of GSIS to resolve this long-pending case according to facts presented here and in favor of Rene C. Bacani, who was 63, when she was finally deprived by GSIS of her lifetime monthly annuity for the past 25 years.

—ARADIO CASAERO, authorized representative of Rene C. Bacani and founding chair and past president, Philippine Association of Retired Persons (PARP), aracasaero@yahoo.com

There's nothing wrong with Abads in gov't

I DON'T see anything wrong, legal or moral, if our Secretary of Budget, Butch Abad, is a billionaire. We are all witness to the excellent Budget Secretary Florencio Abad has made in public service, as well as to the capability, honesty and nobility he has shown. Above all, he is not a thief.

Private has complete trust and confidence in the Abads, especially in the daughter who has served as P-Noy's chief of staff when he was in the Senate.

This only means that the Abad family is among the handful of Filipinos that is credible not by our Constitution. They belong to an exceptional breed of public servants worthy of trust, unlike, in fact, we should look for many Abads to join in government if we want an efficient and corrupt-free government and country.

Lastly, there is absolutely nothing wrong about having people who can indeed serve our country well in pursuit of the objectives to which Aquino administration has committed itself, like stamping out corruption in government.

So, let's give the Abad family the benefit of the doubt. Aquino believes that they can help him carry out his campaign promises.

—ANTONIO A. MUÑOZ, acmuñoz_berkeley@yahoo.com

FOOD OR POISON?

Istanbul University of Turkey has declared in the global Journal of Food that Turkish flour, which is being imported into our country, is contaminated with cancer-causing mycotoxin.

Yet our own Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has pronounced that it is safe for human consumption, endangering the health of millions of Filipino consumers of pan de sal and other bread products made of Turkish flour.

How come the FDA released in advance to the Turkish Embassy the result of its "test," one week before informing the public through the media? Does this not suggest undue influence?

Is it true that some government officials had been "wined and dined" by a lobby group of Turkish traders, resulting in a favorable finding for the Turkish flour?

If the shelf life of flour is only one month before it develops mold and insects, how come Turkish flour in the Philippines has been given one-year expiry dates?

SAMPLE OF WHEAT FLOUR ARRIVALS FROM TURKEY
PORT OF MANILA, MICP
AS OF 05 MARCH 2010

IMPORTERS	ENTRY DATE	NET WEIGHT	DECLARED CNF
(MARCH)			
IMPORTER A	03-MAR-10	120.00MT	$ 89.58/MT
(FEBRUARY)			
IMPORTER B	24-FEB-10	337.50MT	$295.00/MT
IMPORTER C	22-FEB-10	960.00MT	$186.25/MT
(JANUARY)			
IMPORTER D	27-JAN-10	240.00MT	$199.99/MT

Is this the reason behind reports that TURKISH FLOUR sold in the Philippines is infested with LICE and MOLD, the primary source of cancer-causing mycotoxins?

Why do our government officials turn a blind eye to this issue, placing the health and safety of our people at risk just so some greedy traders can make a killing?

Can the Turkish ambassador's self-serving claim that the flour sold and consumed in Turkey has the same "high quality" as the flour exported to our country be believed?

The price of Turkish flour in Turkey at the Polatli Commodity Exchange averages at US$500 per metric ton, while that which reaches the Philippines is valued at less than US$300 per metric ton reference value set by the Bureau of Customs. Is not our country being made a dumping ground for uneatable Turkish flour?

The Turkish flour imported into the Philippines is grossly undervalued possibly to escape customs duties and taxes as well.

With Customs setting the reference value of imported flour at $300 per metric ton, Turkish flour is being imported at a suspiciously much lower value as shown by the chart above.

Is the Food Expo showcasing Turkish flour at SMX Convention Center some kind of damage-control, an effort to show how Turkish flour can be mixed with other flour to mask its low-nutrient content as established by an earlier FDA order for it to be fortified?

Is it at the Food Expo where preservatives and flavourings will be mixed to MASK the MOLDY taste of Turkish flour?

President Benigno Aquino III should look into this matter because it involves his concern of technical smuggling and corruption at the Bureau of Customs, not to mention the danger posed to the health of millions of Filipinos consuming Turkish flour.

What's the difference between mycotoxin and the nicotine in cigarettes, when they both kill, albeit slowly?

With Indonesia already moving to stop the dumping of Turkish flour there, the Philippine government should do no less to protect our people and to stop smuggling at the Bureau of Customs.

Once more, we appeal to P-Noy to ban the suspicious entry of garbage flour into our country!

"Ang pagpili para sa ikabubuti ng taumbayan; ang pagtanaw sa interes ng nakararami; ang pagkapit sa prinsipyo.... Ito po ang tuwid na daan."

-- President Noynoy Aquino

Cebu Pacific to become RP's largest airline

By Jerome Aning

INQUIRER.net

Noy's first paycheck goes straight to the bank

PAL officials, pilots meeting doesn't take off

'Captain Ball' tagged in 'Garci' election cheating

'Walking time bomb,' murder suspect now sits in House

AN OPEN LETTER TO PNOY AND DOTC SECRETARY PING DE JESUS

Dear PNOY and Secretary Ping,

We are a concerned group of Private Emission Testing Centers from all over the country vehemently protesting the Order of LTO Chief Virginia Torres to stop the PETC-Direct Connection Facility.

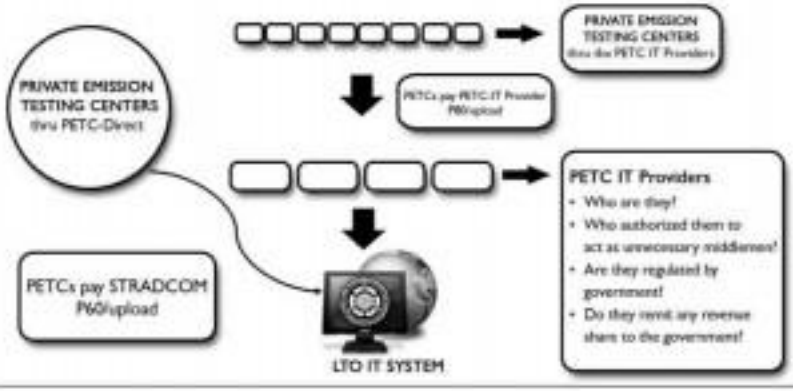
The 4 PETC IT Providers, who placed an ad yesterday in the Philippine Daily Inquirer, namely Eurolink, DMS, ETCIT and Cyberlink have been overcharging the public for years!

They charge us P80 for each PETC transaction while through the PETC Direct facility we only pay a little over P60. We have reported several times to both LTO and the DOTC that these IT providers are conducting grossly unfair practices in the PETC market because they own their own PETCs and favor them over us smaller players, which is a clear case of conflict of interest.

In light of this situation we are constrained to ask several difficult questions:

1. Who are these 4 PETC IT providers and why are they so influential with the LTO for them to stop a system that is far cheaper and better for us small players?
2. Why, after repeated requests for an audience with her, does Assec Torres refuse to meet us and hear our side?
3. Where does the P20 "overprice" of the PETC IT provider go?
4. Who is regulating these PETC IT providers?
5. Who regulates their pricing? Do their price increases go through public consultation? Are they controlled by the LTO or DOTC?
6. Do they remit a share in their revenue for the government?
7. Why does the LTO turn blind eye to the technical deficiencies of the PETC IT providers system?

Below is a diagram of the system which clearly shows the blatant overcharging of the PETC IT providers.



WE URGE THE DOTC TO HEAR THE SIDE OF THE SMALL PETC PLAYERS WHO ONLY WISH TO CONDUCT THEIR BUSINESS IN A TRANSPARENT AND FAIR WAY. PLEASE REVIEW THE ENTIRE PETC SYSTEM AND ALLOW THE TRUTH TO COME OUT.

SAAN O KANINO NAPUPUNTA AND "OVERPRICE" NA 20 PESOS NG MGA PETC IT PROVIDER? MATUWID NA LANDAS PO BA ITO?

ALAGAAN NATIN ANG KALIKASAN, INC. (ANI KALIKASAN)
Room 403 AD Center Square, E. Rodriguez Avenue, corner Evangelista St., Brgy Santolan, Quezon City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2010

SPORTS

NCRAA: Baycats flash winning form; Saints strike

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DEFENDING CHAMPION San Sebastian College-Recoletos of Cavite topped Lyceum of Subic Bay, 84-66, to relaunch its three-peat mission as it, Clare downed University of Makati, 89-74, to also make the winning rustle yesterday in the National Athletics Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities at the UM Gym.

Orphaned by all their five starters from last year, the Baycats pounced on the hapless Gindra to open their first win after losing the inaugural game against University of Manila last Friday.

SSC-R Cox coach Egay Macaraya said they are making the most of whatever was left of their formidable lineup that ruled the league the past two years.

"Whichever team has more maturity has the advantage," said Macaraya, whose squad serves as farm team for the BBC lineup in the NCAA. "But my boys, who are mostly rookies and first-timers in inter-varsity, are struggling a bit."

Six-foot-three small forward Jeoffrey Acuña was one of three, drilling in 20 big points for the Baycats, while point-guard Raymond Alcantara added 18 points.

The Batulan lions toppled performances from this Cornod who scored 20 points as they crunched to a 1-1 record. The Family Heroes are 0-2.

In junior action, Informatics defeated SSCR-Cox, 63-48, Near East University demolished ITU, 90-75, and Mapúa crushed MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology, 107-95.

Box scores

First Game

SSC-R (84)—Acuña 20, Alcantara 18, Pastrana 11, Rabajan 9, Ilio 11, Yarang 6, Pura 7, Reyes 3, Mercurio 2, Castro 2, Labasbas 2, Zapanta 0.

LSB (66)—Fernando 14, Labrador 10, Bing 10, Sevilla 7, Sison 6, Johnson 6, Bartolino 4, Villareal 3, Nonato 2, Villote 1, Miranda 0, Ignacio 0.

Quarters: 20-16, 38-28, 57-45, 84-66

Second Game

ST. CLARE (89)—O'Connell 23, Gutierrez 16, Santos 12, Palmes 10, Ibañez 8, Pelo 7, Pelo 7, Ilisi 6, 6, Carandi 2, Mangaya 2, Pelo 0, Angeles 0, Datang 0, Ilisi 0, Ilisi 0.

UMAK (74)—Cruz 22, Jamay 17, Fajardo 13, Moreno 8, Garcia 6, Calado 6, Ibañez 4, Cajel 2, Villote 2, Tangalin 0, Galacia 0, Bernardo 0, Mendiola 0, Arenas 0.

Quarters: 20-8, 37-17, 57-38, 89-74

Ate 1, Torres 0, Johnson 0, Bartolino 4, Villareal 3, Nonato 2, Villote 1, Miranda 0, Ignacio 0.

Quarters: 20-16, 38-28, 57-45, 84-66

Second Game

ST. CLARE (89)—O'Connell 23, Gutierrez 16, Santos 12, Palmes 10, Ibañez 8, Pelo 7, Pelo 7, Ilisi 6, 6, Carandi 2, Mangaya 2, Pelo 0, Angeles 0, Datang 0, Ilisi 0, Ilisi 0.

UMAK (74)—Cruz 22, Jamay 17, Fajardo 13, Moreno 8, Garcia 6, Calado 6, Ibañez 4, Cajel 2, Villote 2, Tangalin 0, Galacia 0, Bernardo 0, Mendiola 0, Arenas 0.

Quarters: 20-8, 37-17, 57-38, 89-74

Never-say-die Alaska ousts Talk 'N Text

LADIES' DIVISION (Ateneo Coliseum)

1 p.m.—Santa Ana vs. Taft 'M Text

3:30 p.m.—Manila vs. San Miguel

By Marlowe R. Castillo

LIBING AVENGER proves sweet and a sweet finish, Alaska holed off Talk 'N Text for the second straight time, scoring a 98-81 frame 7 victory last night that put the semi-achieving Aces into the best-of-seven finals of the PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

Dionson Simpson scored 16 of his 21 points in the first period as Alaska opened up a double-digit lead early before getting almost everyone to contribute on both ends in the match as the Aces eliminated the Tropang Texters and advanced opposite San Miguel.

Game 1 of the championship series is scheduled tomorrow also at the Big Dome and Alaska will not have time to celebrate this exciting conquest of the most feared team in the tournament.

"I can't believe that I will have to look at him Miguel's tapes when I get home tonight," Cone said. "I just can't believe it."

Alaska was in command all night, once building leach of as many as 18 points twice in the third period only to squirm later in that quarter and settle for a three-point margin en-route the payoff frame.

But the Aces regrouped right away and mustered the firmness to end as Simpson got a lot of help from LA Tenorio and Cyrus Baguio, who dropped the crippling bombs in the end game that doomed Talk 'N Text.

"We were up by 18 and we were thinking Can we really lose this thing?" Cone said. "And after that, boom, they came back. It was really hard for us to regroup. We have to give our guys some credit for staying calm through that storm."

Joe Devance was also big, shooting nine of his 16 points in the third period to salvo Alaska to a 59-41 lead.

Box scores

ALASKA (98)—Simpson 21, Jo Devance 16, Baguio 14, Jawo 10, Tenorio 10, Dela Cruz 10, Dugalino 5, Ochoa 4.

Quarters: 20-16, 38-28, 57-45, 84-66

TALK 'N TEXT (81)—Castro 18, Cardona 16, De Ocampo 15, Ilisi 8, Asaytil, Castro 6, Williams 5, Cuna 2, Calinga 0, Ilisi 0.

Quarters: 24-12, 41-31, 63-45, 81-81

ALASKA'S Reynel Hugnatan protects ball from TNT's Ronnie de Ocampo.

No Taulava for RP five in Lebanon tourney

By Jane Navarro

SMART GILAS will settle for an undermined, all-amateur crew in the Fiba Asia Stanković Cup in Beirut after the Coca-Cola Tigers thumbed down the national team's request to loan Asi Taulava.

Smart Gilas coach Rajko Toroman confirmed there would be no Taulava nor any reinforcement from the Philippine Basketball Association to help the RP five in the Sep. 7 to 15 event.

"He will not join the squad because he wasn't allowed by Coca-Cola for fear that he might get injured," said Toroman of the beefy, 6-foot-9 Taulava.

"There's no other option but to, it would be very difficult if we were to bring in somebody else," added the Serbian mentor, noting that the Coca-Cola bruiser has been unraveling the RP team's practice sessions for quite some time.

Toroman, however, got a much needed boost when it was reported that stone-footed Greg Slaughter will fly to Beirut a day after leading the Cebu franchise to Fiba Asia championship for slots to the 2011 Fiba Asia Championship.

Smart Gilas is playing in the Stanković Cup, which is a good training for the Asian Games in Guangzhou later this year, minus Hubert Hummel, Chris Lutz and naturalization candidate Marcus Douthit.

Lutz and the 6-foot-10 Douthit have yet to secure their Philippine passports while the 6-7 Al Hussaini has to fulfill school commitments.

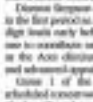
"But we will go there fighting as we try to secure an automatic berth in the Fiba (Asia) Championship next year," said Toroman.

The top three finishers in the Stanković Cup will set Asian play in the qualifying tournament of the Fiba Asia Championship in their respective zones.

Smart Gilas is making a dot in the 2012 London Olympics through next year's Fiba Asia Championship in Beirut.

"The tournament will also serve as a good opportunity for guys like JC Casio and Mark Barroca to perform better than their previous performances in the Jones Cup," said Toroman.

Crucial 3-game Shakey's V-League bill today



By Cedell P. Tupas

A RESURGENT the Ateneo University looks to clinch a quarterfinal spot today when it takes on Perpetual Help in the Shakey's V-League Season 7 second conference at the PhilSports Flying V Arena in San Juan.

The Lady Tenderness gun for a fourth straight victory against the Altas in the first game at 2 p.m.

Ateneo and Lyceum also seek spots in the next round as they battle for fourth and fifth-seed, respectively.

In third spot with a 3-1 record, the Lady Eagles hope to ride on the momentum of their stirring five-set victory over the Lady Heroes when they battle the winless Lady Blazers at 4 p.m.

Although fueled by the Lady Eagles last outing, the Lady Tenderness, with their experienced Mary Jean Balse and Estrella Cruz at the helm, are still favored against the Lady Bulldogs in the 6 p.m. game.

Jen Sebastian-Hazelwood and Adamson had earlier finished rivers to the next round following tonight are victories last Sunday.

A Game would ensure smoother early vacation for the Lady Blazers, who remain winless in five matches.

The Lady Tenderness are in the middle of a remarkable turnaround from a six-game losing slump.

With a 3-4 slate, the Lady Altas need to sweep their last two games to have an even a playoff for the last quarterfinal slot while the Lady Bulldogs, at 2-5, remain in contention.

Ateneo is hoping that Thai import Jutarat Jeawkeaw Boonyuen sustains her brilliant form against St. Benilde Amornsawadee, a member of the Thailand national pool, posted for 23 points against the Lady Pirates.

Marquez's short route to Pacquiao trilogy

THOMAS: A short route Juan Manuel Marquez may take if he really wants to fight Manny Pacquiao again.

All the Mexican World Boxing Organization welterweight champion needs to do is beat any one of four fighters named by Top Rank honcho and Pacquiao promoter Bob Arum.

In an interview by Fanhouse's Lem Satterfield Tuesday, Arum mentioned World Boxing Council welterweight champion Vicente Escobar Rerrio, Joshua Clottey, WBO junior welterweight titlist Timothy Bradley and WBC and International Boxing Federation king Devon Alexander as the fighters Marquez need to conquer to gain a third shot at the Filipino versus division champion.

A victory over any of these four would make a Pacquiao-Marquez III a legitimate sell, according to Arum, adding that Marquez's recent second-session decision victory over journeyman Joan Diaz was not definitive enough considering that it was held at 130 pounds.

CLOTTEY

Arum said Marquez has yet to prove himself as a legitimate welterweight contender, especially with the way he was thoroughly dominated by Floyd Mayweather Jr in their encounter early this year.

To dispel the notion that he isn't competitive in the higher weights, Arum said Marquez must fight and beat quality big guys like Clottey, whom Pacquiao successfully defended in their 147-lb encounter at The Cowboys Stadium in Texas.

After repeating over Diaz, the 36-year-old Marquez recovered his call for matches made with Pacquiao, the Filipino at the time-in-and pound for-pound king who is ranked as the best by both Montiano Antonio Margarito or Hatton, U.S.

In their first meeting in 2004, Marquez survived three first round knockdowns to earn a controversial draw. In their second battle in 2008, Marquez suffered another knockdown in the third round and lost to Pacquiao by split decision.

Que 4 behind with a 70

ELISA, LUBBUK, Angeles Que backed a double bogey on his opening hole to shoot a 1 under-par 71 that became the top Filipino score in the first round of the Worldwide Holdings Selangor Masters Ridderadeg.

Que, who closed the cut in last week's Brunei Open, hit five birdies at 2-over 36 but bladed the first three holes on the back nine to wind up four strokes behind Malaysian Arif Rizman, who grabbed the lead with a 66.

Jonie Pagsanjan, Mars Pamo and Jay Bayron were the next best Filipinos with identical 72, while Inzonio Lacuata was a shot behind at 73.

Bayron, who was third in Brunei, rallied from a triple bogey seven on No. 2 while Pocoy bagged his last two holes.

The rest of the Filipinos struggled with Thailand's Aunsit, Gene Morales and Gerald Rosales carding 75s and American Shankland and Michael Blair submitting 76s.

Race 1—[illegible] Hasty Jet (—), Diamond Ace (—), Inspirational Ace (—), Sweet Ace (—).

Race 2—[illegible] Miss Chin Sweet (4), Hasday (7), Best Of Summertime (6), Most (3).

Race 3—[illegible] Queen (6), Pet (3), Hot (6), South Pearl (3), Romo's Magic (on Account) (1).

Race 4—[illegible] Queen Cora (5), Grand Dynasty (2).

Race 5—[illegible] [illegible] (—), Mark Land (1), Queen Cora (5), Grand Dynasty (2).

Race 6—[illegible] [illegible] (—), Mark Land (1), Queen Cora (5), Grand Dynasty (2).

Race 7—[illegible] [illegible] (—), Mark Land (1), Queen Cora (5), Grand Dynasty (2).

**Race

Celtics, Heat open NBA; Shaq on board?

NEW YORK—The Miami Heat will debut their All-Star trio of Dwyane Wade, LeBron James and Chris Bosh as Boston at the opening night of the NBA season against the defending Eastern Conference champion Celtics, who are led by their veteran group of Paul Pierce, Kevin Garnett and Ray Allen.

And, if talks hold up, the Celtics might just have Shaquille O'Neal starring against his former team.

The Los Angeles Lakers will host Houston in the other opener on Dec. 26, the NBA announced Tuesday. The Lakers-Rockets hope is here this May back in the lineup after he missed last season with a foot injury.

The Christmas schedule will again feature five games, highlighted by the return of the Finn Lakers matchup that was originally slated for Dec. 25 after Los Angeles ended O'Neal in Miami in 2004.

O'Neal has since played for the Phoenix Suns and the Cleveland Cavaliers and is one of the last big-named free agents to find a spot for the next season.

O'NEAL

But according to an Associated Press source, the Celtics were making progress on a deal that would bring O'Neal to the defending Eastern Conference champions.

The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because the deal was not yet final.

Earlier Tuesday, O'Neal said he will be in the league next season and would rather retire than play for a team he didn't want to.

The 38-year-old O'Neal averaged 9.0 points and 5.0 rebounds in 50 games with the Los Angeles Lakers and another with Miami.

"I know I will play in the NBA next season," O'Neal said. "Internationally? No. The good thing about me and my answer is I come in, did it my way, did more than expected. For every athlete or every great person, there is a time when it's time to end. When and if it's over, cool. It will be very gracefully."

Boston will visit Orlando on Christmas for a rematch of the four finals. The remainder of that day's schedule includes Chicago at New York, Denver at Oklahoma City and Portland at Golden State.

The full NBA schedule will be released Aug. 10, but the league unveiled its nationally televised games for the opening week of the season, Christmas and Martin Luther King Jr. Days.

There was more heightened interest in the schedule this season because of the attention on the Heat, who got James and Bosh to join Wade last month.

James' return to Cleveland, mostly to face a spectacle because of Cavaliers fans' anger over the Ohio native's departure, did not land on one of the marquee dates. AP

UAAP

Eagles, Falcons seek tie for 3rd today

By Jasmine W. Paya

ATENEO THRIVES on avoid a repeat of last year's biggest elimination upset when the Blue Eagles ran into the winless University of the Philippines-Maroons in the Third UAAP men's basketball tournament today at the Araneta Coliseum.

Although Ateneo coach Norman Black places little emphasis on that history last year, he expects the Eagles to live up to their lofty billing as they bid for a share of second place in the 4 p.m. match.

"We've just going to go out there and win the game," said Black. "If you look at our schedule, we played the seemingly tougher teams early, the ones on top of the standings right now. Now, we're playing some of the teams that are below us, so this is an opportunity for us to take advantage of that."

Adamson, tied for third with Ateneo at 3-2, shoots for the same goal against the fourthback University of the East Warriors at 2 p.m.

Veterans by Ateneo and Adamson will pack three keys a share of second with idle La Salle at 4-2, behind the Eastern University's perfect 6-0 record.

Last year, the back-to-back champion Eagles absorbed their lone elimination loss against the erratic-acting Maroons.

Now under acting coach Bayer Fernandez, the Maroons head into their first meeting with the Eagles winless anew in five outings.

The Warriors, meanwhile, snapped their own two-game losing skid by sapping the Shawnee, 88-54, last Saturday.

"We made a commitment to play defense," said UE coach Lawrence Chongson. "After four games, our teams was last in points allowed, last in rebounds, last in defense, so we made the necessary adjustments."

GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
1 p.m.—Ateneo vs UP
4 p.m.—Adamson vs UE

UE's top guard Paul Lee took charge in the end game by hitting clutch triples even if the Maroons were nearly pulled out a victory behind the hot shooting of FE-Am rookie Mike Silongan.

"I'm still adjusting because we lost [to graduation] a solid lineup," Lee, who remains bothered by a foot injury said of the Warriors' poor start just a year after reaching the finals.

"I have a lot of new teammates and most of them lack exposure," added Lee. "I'm also trying to help them."

Ateneo guard Eric Salamat, also saddled by a knee injury in his earlier games, finally regained his form as he drilled 20 points to lead the Eagles to Saturday's 82-68 rout of National U.

Rirk Long also came up big by nailing 12 of his 19 points from three-point range while Nico Salva added 14 markers for the Eagles.

WITH his knees holding up, Eric Salamat of Ateneo (right) is expected to play a top role against UP

Streaking Red Lions feast on Chiefs

HOME Dots Ross of San Beda (right) colors the rebound with authority against Christian Poims of Arellano

By Cedell P. Tejos

SAN BEDA woke up like a sleeping giant.

The Red Lions threw the full weight of their vaunted arsenal at the Arellano Chiefs in the last 20 minutes, easily wiping out a double-digit halftime deficit en route to an emphatic 83-57 victory yesterday in the 86th NCAA men's basketball tournament at the FilOil Flying V Arena in San Juan.

In a second-half performance few teams in the league could rival, the Lions overwhelmed the Chiefs, 61-14, in the last two quarters to extend their unbeaten start to six games.

"Where in this country can you find a second-half performance like that?" declared San Beda coach Frankie Lim.

"We just wanted on the switch in the second half. So you can just imagine our firepower when our team plays to its potential."

Baldee, Lorizo bounced back from a pair of lopsided losses by dumping In Bendle, 70-54.

Reinoffer Aba, the eldest son of Knights coach Louie, fired 15 points and grabbed 11 rebounds to Lemon-Isiland his second in 3-4 and gain a share of fifth with Arellano.

Stepping up in the absence of leading scorer Jiovis Lanete, who sat out the game due to a mild sprain, Anthony Semerad, a 6-foot-4 recruit from Batulaan, Australia, who 20 points, including 16 in the second half for the Lions, who rallied 34 fourth-period points.

With reserves Aldo Pascual and Rafael Daniel struggling to find their rhythm, the Lions also drew superb efforts from Dave Maverik, Rome Dela Rosa and Borgie Hermida.

Mayrelo had 10 points and 14 rebounds, Dela Rosa posted 10 points, 7 rebounds and six assists and Hermida flirted with a triple-double and had 11 points, eight rebounds and eight assists.

The Chiefs reined a 50-27 lead at the break on Daniel del Rosario's buzzer-beater, but outlasted in the second half when San Beda applied a full-court press that led to easy transition points.

The Chiefs' 12-point lead vanished in the first two and a half minutes of the third after Semerad fired seven straight points before Dela Rosa restored the comeback with three baskets that silenced the Lions, 30-30, heading into the fourth period. San Beda opened the last quarter with a 27-22 run that put the game beyond doubt.

In juniors' action, San Beda dubbed Arellano, 77-43, to keep cop spot with a 5-1 record, while Lorizo subdued St. Benilde, 68-64, to improve to 3-3 card.

The score scorer
[illegible]

STANDINGS
[illegible]

GAMES TODAY
[illegible]

PBL-LIGA

Hobe, Treston fives subdue opponents

GAMES TODAY
(Ynsg. Ann Memorial Gym., Bgnde City)
11 a.m.—Manotoc stakes Ilfil
12 p.m.—Ivanna Lagarteja vs Wine Shop-Laguna

HOST HOBE Bilous Tagaytay and Treston Laguna bounded over respective opponents yesterday at the start of the final leg of the Tournament of the Philippines at the Ynsg. Ann Memorial gym in Sigsad Village, Tagaytay City.

Tagaytay blows 17-point lead but hung on to defeat stubborn Manchester Ushio, 75-70, while the rival Bilous rallied from 10-points down in the third quarter to post a 92-85 overtime victory over Ami-FOA.

Both squads, aiming to claim a twice-to-beat advantage in the quarters, try to gain one step closer to the finals when they clash today.

The Londoncrete crew ahead, 10-6G, with 1:59 to play on a triple by point guard Ronald Bucaro, but Jeff Standon tied the game with a putback. Then, a send by Lou Gamarabis later led to a layup by Big man Arden Gotjoh putting the home squad up 73-68 with 1:14 to go.

After a defensive stop, Gamarabis iced the game by draining a three for a 75-68 lead, 21.7 ticks remaining.

"Luckily we were able to make some big steps on the defensive end down the stretch," said coach Bing Victoria.

Standon and fast-in Gamarabis Tagaytay with 22 points apiece while Harold Sta Cruz added seven points and 13 rebounds. Gamarabis finished with seven points, nine rebounds and four assists.

Earlier, The Southern leased on guard Ricky Escalaestra and Marlon Legaspi in the fourth and overtime periods.

Escalaestra, who played for the Thailand Tigers in the Asean Basketball League, fired 21 points (2-of-2) shooting while adding six steals.

Legaspi, a former PBL Most Valuable Player, added 15 points and 12 rebounds.

The Brewmen want their finals spree to a less-of-worse-series than more than Friday.

Winning the best-drinking title was the team of Alan Cauzon of the San Teddyboy Mekenzie of the Brewers, Tina Marcelli and Mark Gonzales of the Bullrets and Siddeyn's Mall Cavite. They clocked one minute and 26 seconds.

Finishing second was the group of Bullrets's Mirabai Cabral, Brewmen's Roy Luarca and Francis Cebuc, Dewy Ramos of People's Journal and Mahgie's Jerome Lagasand at 1:28.

Third place was the team of Xiner Badua and Eddie Yap Santos of Sports Stalls, Addy Perez of Adamo, Jenny Mendoza of Sunshine Stalls and Denny Simon of Bernie Tonight. They timed 1:37.

The event culminates with the Centurion Edition later this year. For details, call 833-2307/ 0922-8620833 or visit 0922-8620833 and log on to www.mikeadamsonthephilippines.com.ph.

WNCAA gets going Saturday

By Ramona S. Ramos

NATIONAL TEAM members and daughters of popular athletes are among the attractions of the Women's National Collegiate Athletic Association (WNCAA) that unfolds its 41st season on Saturday at Rizal Memorial Coliseum in Manila.

Rookie team St. Paul College Pasig will parade badminton ace Danielle Ramos, whose father Bong was a former mga pro, and Sheila Castillo, the younger of two daughters of Allan who holds the all-time individual scoring record of 77 points in the PBA.

Mikhaela Jessica Jose, son of former PBA player Bobby and Angelican Castillo Cruz are members of the National women's Under-19 basketball squad.

Perpetual College is the other rookie team, bringing in 10 the members of the country's first and only tri-level league for women.

St. Paul and Perpetual are members of the newest conference in basketball, volleyball and baseball-the midget and junior divisions. St. Paul is actually a returning member as it has joined previous editions of the tournament being supported by the bayanan, Senate Sports, official print partner bulletin, Lessons, Goody and NBC Press.

Letran-Goodtet U, last year's entire overall championship was runner up, to the tune of 6 games four.

"Our goal is 20 games and we've just one school short this season," said league president Ms. Vivian Manila of St. Scholastica during yesterday's press conference at the Adamson restaurant in Malate, Manila. "But our long-term goal remains the same: to try to be at par with male athletes and the most popular leagues."

GRACING the launch of the WNCAA were (from left) Ms. Angelica dela Cruz of San Beda Alabang, WNCAA secretary general; Dr. Ricardo de Leon, CEU EVP; Ms. Vivian P. Manila of St. Scholastica, WNCAA president; Dr. Cristina Padolina, CEU president

Beermen aim to work hard in Fiesta finals

THE SAN Miguel Beermen on Tuesday night vowed to work hard for the PBA Fiesta Conference crown.

Taking a break after crushing the Rain, the Beermen, led by Danny Seigle, briefly ganged the 2nd San Miguel Beer National Beer Drinking Contest media edition at The Crime Restaurant in the San Miguel By The Bay at the SMC Mall of Asia.

Seigle, who played for the Thailand Tigers in the Asean Basketball League, fired 21 points (2-of-2) shooting while adding six steals.

Legaspi, a former PBL Most Valuable Player, added 15 points and 12 rebounds.

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- Philippine School of Business Administration
- Polytechnic University of the Philippines
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— Andrew L. Tan,
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MEGAWORLD FOUNDATION, INC

Aplus METRO
Editor Alexander S. Ulanday

DID YOU KNOW

ABOUT 20 percent of the 1.9 million overseas Filipino workers hired from April to September 2009 worked in Saudi Arabia.
(NYC, Directorate, Inquirer Research)

Student stabbed dead on campus

By Nancy C. Carvajal

MORNING classes were about to begin yesterday at Commonwealth High School on Commonwealth Avenue when two students were heard arguing loudly in the corridor.

At first, everyone assumed that it was just a fist fight—a common occurrence in one of the most populated secondary schools in Quezon City.

But when a teacher, Jeanne Estrada, stepped out of her classroom to see what was going on, she saw a student lying on the ground and another one standing over him, holding a screwdriver.

The first student was immediately taken to Fairview General Hospital where he was pronounced dead on arrival due to a stab wound in the chest.

The student with the screwdriver, on the other hand, was placed in the custody of the school security personnel who later turned him over to the police.

PO3 Neil Gardoce of the Quezon City Police District homicide section identified the victim as Simon Isiad, 20, a fourth-year student, and his attacker as Mike Rogelan, 19, also a senior.

"We thought it was just another fist fight but when we saw Mike take out a screwdriver and stab Simon, we got scared because we thought he might have gone crazy and may stab anyone near him," a student who witnessed the incident said.

Estrada said she was just about to start

VIOLENCE, A12

Condo workers stop draining basement

By Tina G. Santos

THE MANAGEMENT of Shoe Tower in Barangay Ringdal, Makati City, has stopped siphoning off the rainwater collected in the building's basement.

Makati city engineer Nelson Morales said yesterday that the condominium's maintenance employees suddenly quit working on Tuesday, two days before the deadline set by the city government.

City officials earlier gave the management of the 22-story condominium until Friday to drain the basement to the drainage system, the source of an oil leak in the area.

In a statement, Morales said that when a team went to the building yesterday morning, the security guard on duty refused to tell them why work in the basement had stopped.

He added that they tried to talk to the building administrator, Victoria Cledo, but failed to find him. There were also no signs of the building maintenance personnel.

"They seem to have abandoned their work. We also cannot get hold of the oil-

CONDO, A12

Most wanted man in Pasay shot dead

By Tina G. Santos

INDAY CITY'S most wanted man died in a shootout with policemen on Thursday night.

Senior Superintendent Benito Ebuen Tiongko, alleged leader of the Tiongkokan Robbery Group, with Boto commander Jeffrey Cruz and Senior Inspector Chief Insp. Jerry Gobrelle, head of the Pasay Police Station Investigation and Detection Management Team, on Nemesio Street in Pasay around 6:45 p.m.

Police were led there following a tip that Boto used his motorcycle in the area. Upon seeing the lawmen, the suspects fired shots at them, prompting the latter to retaliate.

Boto, his companion Nestor Vinoy and a member of the police team, PO1 Ernesto Dupac, sustained wounds during the gun battle.

Boto was declared dead on arrival at the Pasay City General Hospital because of multiple gunshot wounds, while Vinoy and Dupac remain under observation at the hospital.

Blaming wishful on the part of the police, Boto's family condemned the operation that led to the arrest of two other companions of Boto's, Arnold Bobet, 22, and Antonino Buyanadia, 19.

Seized from the suspects were several firearms and ammunition and a hand grenade.

Senior Supt. Rizal Felicisimo Marantan, Pasay City chief of police, said Boto was considered the city's public enemy number 1. His group was involved in a series of robbery, snatch and car theft incidents in the southern part of Metro Manila, Marantan added.

The syndicate has several unsolved snatch of motor vehicles in different cities.

The suspects also allegedly staged a hold-up operation on 7 Eleven Street at 3 a.m. on Aug. 3 where they

(See page 2, Col. 1)

Residents panic over foul odor

By Nino Calleja

PEOPLE living beside a storehouse containing agricultural products in Valenzuela City panicked on Tuesday night when a strong stench coming from the facility made their eyes water.

Police Chief Insp. Hazel Asis, senior investigator of the city's Bureau of Fire, said residents called them up to complain about the foul odor coming from Bldng 7777 Intersalinas at Agricultural Products Co. on A. Maceda Street.

Fire investigators who went to the storehouse later found out that the stench was caused by ammonia leaking from the facility's cooling system.

They said the leak started when workers of the company changed the main valve of the cooling system.

The leak was contained after 30 minutes and no injuries or casualties were brought to the hospital as a result, Montefina said.

What's the use of your wealth if you can't enjoy it?

SEX APPEAL IS NOT A MYTH

ALTHOUGH Malaysian party-list Rep. Walden Bello's trash of former Presidents and now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's borderline ambiguity, she certainly deserved it.

Bello's privilege speech — described Arroyo's misuse title to "separate compensation, bonuses, encapsulation of presidential pardon, political purposes and massive waste of people's money."

He also said her subordinates behaved. "like pigs," with her to model.

Now, the shoe is on the other foot: Gloria is being compensated and put to shame — and by her own colleagues yet.

Where she still held the highest post of the land she won the opposition under used her husband Mike Arroyo to hound the media by filing libel cases after corrupt reporters and columnists who exercised her and her husband's ire. She would shower her subordinates in public by most members without regard for their dignity and pride.

The law of karma has caught up with her. Whatever you do to your fellowmen will be done to you.

ON TARGET

Kuroon Jolfo

And to Mike Arroyo, this is what you have to say: What is the use of your wealth if you can't enjoy it? You won't have one for it was like Dolor Side.

Carmelita "Mel" Enriquez, chief of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, was late for our lunch date yesterday.

It was out of character for the lady who was always on time in any appointment with her in the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

Enrique did not hold a high position there, so she could afford to be prompt in her appointments.

But now Director plays another ban to overseas workers who contract to the country with serious ailments or in burns, or because of oppression suffered at the hands of employers abroad.

That is the position in managing an office that takes care of the needs of millions of overseas contract workers.

This lady who holds a doctorate in public administration from the University of the Philippines, puts in 12 to 14 hours a day, including weekends when she never expected of overseas workers spin at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Even she still have time for her self and her family?

"The overseas workers are my humble bliss," said May, a bachelor lawyer.

Student stabbed dead

(From page A11)

her class when she heard a commotion in the corridor.

"I was sad when I checked. I saw the victim lying on the ground while the suspect was standing there still holding the weapon," she told the reporters.

Another teacher said that classes were temporarily suspended after the stabbing although students were told to return to their rooms after a few hours.

The police said that based on their investigation, the victim went to Ruspino's classroom at around 8:50 a.m. and challenged him to a fist fight.

"At first, there was no fist fight," they said then they were exchanging blows when all of a sudden, Mike pulled out a screwdriver and stabbed Ramos," media reports said.

According to Gardiaz, the two were members of rival gangs.

Another teacher who asked not to be named said that due to the school's large number of students, fights were a regular occurrence.

"We have to issue students re-fire slips sometimes after class but they are quickly contained. This is the first time a student died," she added.

Condo workers stop . . .

(From page A11)

association or any official who can give us an explanation," Montefina said.

"I think it's about time that the owners make their building administrators account for his actions which have adversely affected not only the residents of West Tower but the neighborhoods as well," he added.

Montefina had warned building administrators as early as June that to meet the Friday deadline, the city government would be left with no choice but to revoke the condominium's occupancy and building permits.

On Monday, Lydia Donato, the head of the city's Department of Environmental Services, said three more violations that the building management have had been dumping the waste that was being siphoned from the basement into the drainage system.

She added that a team from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources had been sent to the site to assess the possible effects of the alleged dumping on the surrounding area.

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Razon: Move oil depot to offshore site

By BJ Yap

NOTEWITH Manila mayoral candidate Arthur Robles yesterday called for a "renewed remedy" to move the Pandacan oil depot to an offshore site, saying the facility was an accident waiting to happen.

"We cannot just sit and wait for an accident to happen. I urge my fellow Manileños to join a renewed crusade to remove the oil depot from Pandacan for the safety of investments and the redevelopment of the area," Robles, a former Philippine Business White chief, said.

In a statement, he lamented the decision of the city council last year to grant another ordinance that allowed the so-called "big 4" oil companies to stay in Pandacan, reportedly because residents would lose their jobs and the city would lose income.

"But now, San Miguel Corp., Petron and the Manila North Harbour Port Inc. are offering a solution that would let two birds with one stone. Relocate the hazardous Pandacan oil depot to the proposed Manila North Harbor," he said.

"That will not only guarantee more jobs but also more income for the city," Robles said.

San Miguel Corp. is reportedly in talks with Pilipinas Shell, Petron and Chevron about their possible relocation to the Manila North Harbor, which is said to be an ideal location for a depot.

Razon said the plan would also address the concerns of Pilipinas Shell that relocating to oil tanks from Pandacan would entail costs that would make gasoline more expensive for consumers.

He said Petron has already offering to develop an offshore oil tank farm in partnership with other oil companies. Also, the 10-hectare Pandacan property can be sold to cover part of the cost of building another facility, he added.

Abalos protests 4 cops' transfer to Mindanao

By Nino Calleja

MAKATI CITY (PIO): Mayor Benhur Abalos warned yesterday that the transfer of four members of the city's Drug Enforcement Unit (DEU) to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao would affect the city's anti-drug campaign.

Abalos said the city's Peace and Order Council recently drafted a resolution asking the Philippine National Police to reverse the transfer of Senior Insp. Harry Bascial, former head of Mandaluyong police DEU, and three other noncommissioned officers.

The resolution will soon be forwarded to PNP Director General Jesus Verzosa, he added.

According to Abalos, the police officials were privy to some 1,000 drug cases pending in the city's courts since they were behind most of the drug arrests and raids that were the basis of the cases.

"I don't want to interfere into their internal procedures because this is strictly the prerogative of the PNP chief. But they should take into consideration the status of the drug cases these people would be leaving behind," he said in his statement.

"It would be a great detriment to the city. These cases could be made dismissed for incompetence of witnesses," Abalos added.

The sentiment runs of the DEU was released earlier this year after one of them allegedly tried to extort P250,000 from a drug suspect in exchange for the release of his confiscated shabu.

Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila
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The Judicial and Bar Council announces that the following are applicants for judgeship positions:
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT (RTC) (NCJR): BIANLA CITY (By.): ULIA-ALITI & MA. AGAD, Irma P.; ARPUAN, Alfredo D.; BAGNIC, Dario D.; BANDONG, Dinah Evangelista S.; BAUN, Ma. Susana T.; BUCO, Joshua H.; BUENAVENTURA, Rolando P.; BULAGTAN, Achilles C.; CALPATURA, Cecilio S.; CAPELLAN, Maria S.; CASTRO, Rose M.; CATALO, Lourdes C.; CEGUERA, Maria Cheryl L.; CONCEPCION, Victor D.; DELA PEÑA, Estibar J.; DUAZEN, Nelson J. C.; DUNLAO, Lolita C.; ESTOPIA, Pelagio R.; HIDALGO, Georgina D.; ITURRALDE, Robert L.; LAGNDENI, Agapito Jr. R.; LUGARPI, Emilio Rodolfo III T.; LIM, Sarah Nina M.; LUBIAT, Antonio C.; LUSUAN, Abel A.; MADDELA, Ramon Eduardo III B.; MALABAR, Bodo M.; MANGOSIN, Catherine M.; MARTILLA, Apolo C.; MAYNIGO, Rolando; PARREÑO, Purificacion V.; MENDIOLA, Ronald B.; NOLASCO, Ma. Nerissa U.; PABIA, Fe M.; SOLUREN, Crescyn D.; SUBIA, Joselito A.; TEODON, Lou-Marie P.; TINOLA, Wilfredo V.; URBI, Emil C.; VILLANUEVA, Daniel C.; YSON, Ma. Fay B.; ZURMEN, Maricelita M.; CALOOCAN CITY (By.): CAPELLAN, Maria S.; CHUA, Elsie S.; DIASEN, Marcos Jr. C.; ESCALADA, Ramiger Jr. M.; HIDALGO, Georgina D.; LARON, Henry F.; LILAGAN, Priscy T.; MACERIN, Luis Dante D.; MANTALA, Apolo S.; NOLASCO, Ma. Nerissa U.; QUINTIN, Edison P.; SOLUREN, Crescyn D.; TICSON, Lou-Marie P.; YSON, Ma. Fay B.
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MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURT (MCTC) (REGION I): PAGUILIN-BURGOS-LLOCOS NORTE: ABBOT, Richardson S.; ALMAZAN, Renard Gerland S.; CALUPIG, Rommel S.
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All applicants for judicial positions must submit to the JBC ASAP via fax, mail or e-mail their updated JBC Form 1 (Revised September 2007) proof of age and Filipino citizenship, and 2010 Ombudsman, NBI, BIR, ISBC and Police Clearances, Medical Certificate, and other requirements before the date of their interview. Those who fail to submit the necessary requirements shall neither be interviewed nor considered for nomination.
4 August 2010
ATTY. MA. LOURDES D. FILAMOR
Clerk of Court & JBC
Ex Officio Secretary

Jihadists claim suicide attack on Japan tanker

WASHINGTON—Militant jihadists on Tuesday claimed that a suicide bomber blew himself up on a Japanese oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz last week, the US monitoring group SITE said.

Mitsui OSK Lines had previously reported that one of its tankers, the M Star, appeared to have been hit by an explosion July 28 in the waterway between Oman and Oman.

SITE said the Brigades of Abdullah Azzam claimed in a message on jihadist websites that it had placed a suicide bomber on the tanker, identifying him as Ayyub al-Tatilaan.

It said the attack was carried out in the name of Omar Abdul Rahman, the Egyptian "Blind Sheikh" implicated in the United States for his role in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing in New York.

The attack sought "to retaliate the infidel global order which is there since Muslim lands and which bows its resources," the brigade said, according to SITE.

FRAMEGRAB image shows Ayyub al-Tatilaan who the Brigades of Abdullah Azzam claimed was the suicide bomber who attacked the oil tanker M Star in the Straits of Hormuz on July 28.

"We stripped the pulchritudes of the statement until our heroes returned safely to their bases," Mitsui OSK Lines officials had said even members saw a flash and heard an explosion in the incident shortly after midnight local time a week ago.

The crewmen was slightly injured in the explosion, which caused minor damage in the ship, inducing an indentation several meters across in the hull, according to pictures published by state-run UAE news agency WAM.

Mitsui had dismissed reports it might have been hit by a bomb wave.

The Japan-bound vessel—returned by 16 Filipinos and 15 Indians—was carrying 279,000 tons of crude oil but did not suffer a spill.

One of the crew saw a flash on the horizon, while several other sailors heard an explosion, Mitsui said, adding that the weather was fine and there were no reports of high waves in the region. AFP

Floods kill dozens more in Pakistani heartland

PAKISTANI flood survivors line up for food supplies at a World Food Program distribution center near Peshawar on Aug. 4. AP

ISTIAQUE, Pakistan—Flooding has ravaged hundreds of villages in Pakistan's heartland on Wednesday, killing dozens more people and destroying thousands of homes, aid workers warned that bloated rivers would soon surge into the country's south, and said Pakistanis should prepare for more evacuations.

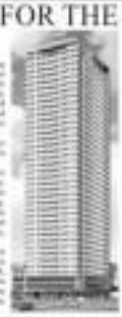
This year's monsoon season has prompted the worst flooding in Pakistan in living memory, and already killed more than 1,500 people. The UN scrambled to provide food and other assistance to some 3.5 million people affected in the worst-soaked nation, which was already struggling with an Islamist militancy and poor economy.

In Pakistan's Punjab province, floodwaters deluged numerous villages and began pouring into major urban centers such as the city of Bahawalpur. The army used boats and helicopters to move stranded villagers to the area to higher ground.

Water levels were so high in large tracts of the Sulaiman and the nearby area of Layyah in the south of the province, that only treetops and uppermost floors of some buildings were visible.

Military spokesperson Maj. Gen. Nadir Zeb told reporters on Wednesday that at least 30,000 people have been rescued from flood-hit areas in Rahim Yar Khan and nearby areas over the previous 72 hours. AP

WATCH OUT FOR THE LAUNCHING



S. Arabia orders BlackBerry ban

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates—Saudi Arabia is ordering its mobile operators to halt BlackBerry services throughout the kingdom due next week, heightening tensions between device maker Research In Motion Ltd. and governments demanding greater access to data sent on the phones.

The Saudi state news agency SPA said in a report late Tuesday that the country's telecom regulator has informed mobile service providers in the country that they must halt BlackBerry services starting Friday.

The regulation, known as the Communications and Information Technology Commission, wouldn't immediately be reached for comment.

Most of the ban comes just days after the neighboring United Arab Emirates announced it was planning to shut down e-mail, messaging and Web browsing on BlackBerry starting in October.

India is also in talks with RIM over how information is managed on the devices. Like the UAE, it has cited security concerns in pushing for greater access to encrypted information sent by the phones that gets routed through the Canadian company's computer systems.

Saudi Arabia did not spell out its concerns about the devices, though its government is also wary of security threats. As in the UAE, Saudi BlackBerry phones are popular both among businesspeople and youth who use the phones' relatively secure communications features as a way to avoid attention from the authorities.

Earlier on Tuesday, RIM denied that it had reported to neighborhood surveillance of its corporate clients by the India government, as talks continue over access to e-mails and other data sent on the devices. AP

BP: Oil well plug successful

NEW ORLEANS—BP on Wednesday said that it had succeeded in plugging a ruptured oil well in the Gulf of Mexico, signaling an end to the worst spill in the United States' history.

The eight-hour "static kill" procedure, which involved pumping heavy drilling fluid known as the industry as mud into the busted well, had gone as planned although the ultimate success would continue to be monitored.

"The well pressure is now being controlled by the hydrostatic pressure of the drilling mud, the decision-making of the static kill procedure," the British company said in a statement.

The apparent breakthrough came 106 days after a devastating explosion aboard the BP-leased Deepwater Horizon rig on April 20 killed 11 workers and unleashed the biggest oil spill in history.

The 4.9 million barrel leak threatened the fish and wildlife-rich US Gulf coast with environmental ruin and plunged coastal economies of four states of regional importance. Two months of anguish over their livelihoods and the region's future.

BP also emerged from the ordeal many billions of dollars poorer and with its operations tarnished by a succession of failures to stop the leak and a public relations gaffes by ousted CEO Tony Hayward.

In its statement, BP said it could yet pump more mud into the well in order to push leaking crude oil back into its source rock.

"The well is now being monitored, per the procedure, to ensure the well remains static," it said. "Further pumping of mud may or may not be required depending on the results observed during monitoring." It said it would continue to work with the Obama administration's petroleum Thad Allen "to determine the next course of action, which includes procedures to inject cement into the well via the same route." AFP

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Greco

Plan to build mosque near ground zero wins approval

NEW YORK—A city panel on Tuesday cleared the way for the construction near ground zero of a mosque that has caused a political uproar over religious freedom and the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks even as opponents vowed to press their case in court.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission voted unanimously to deny landmark status to a building two blocks from the World Trade Center site that developers want to tear down and convert into an Islamic community center and mosque. The panel said the 152-year-old, three Manhattan building isn't distinctive enough to be considered a landmark.

The decision drew praise from Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who mapped before supper on Downtown's Manzi with the Statue of Liberty in a backdrop shortly after the panel voted and called the mosque project a key test of Americans' commitment to religious freedom.

"The World Trade Center site will forever hold a special place in our city, in our hearts," said Bloomberg, a Republican-turned-Independent. "But our world has changed, in the best part of ourselves, and who we are as New Yorkers and Americans, if we said no to a mosque in lower Manhattan."

The vote was a setback for opponents of the mosque, who say it disrespects the memory of those killed at the hands of Islamic terrorists on Sept. 11, 2001. Jeers and shouts of "Shame on you"—could be heard after the panel's vote.

The American Center for Law and Justice, a conservative advocacy group founded by the Rev. Pat Robertson, announced it would challenge the panel's decision in state court Wednesday.

ACLJ attorney Brett Jordan said the group would file a petition alleging that the landmarks panel "acted arbitrarily and abused its discretion."

The proposed mosque has emerged as a national political issue, with prominent Republicans from former vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin to former House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich living up against it. The Anti-Defamation League, the nation's most prominent Jewish civil rights group, became the most outspoking religious freedom, shocked many groups when it spoke out against the mosque last week.

The League said building the Islamic center "in the shadow of the World Trade Center will cause some victims more pain—unnecessarily—and that is not right."

Bloomberg on Tuesday said that allowing religious freedom to Muslims would play into terrorists' hands. He said firefighters and other first responders who died in the Sept. 11 attacks had done so to protect the US Constitution.

"In rushing into those burning buildings, not one asked, 'What god do you pray to? What book do you follow?'" Bloomberg said of the first responders. "We do not honor their lives by denying the very constitution at rights they died protecting."

Former Gov. Rick Lazio, a Republican running for governor of New York, attended the commission meeting with a handful of opponents to the mosque, subtly is being downplayed by a group called the Cordoba Initiative. Its Mosque, it's about it being at ground zero, it's about it being spearheaded by an imam who has numerous ties with radical Islamic causes and has made comments that should chill every single American, frankly." AP

WORKERS unload window frames across the street from 45-47 Park Place on Aug. 3 in New York City. The NYC Landmark's Commission voted to over grant landmark status to the building, clearing the way for the property to be converted into a mosque and Islamic community center. AFP PHOTO/JEWEL SAMAD

Broadway on the Runway at Resorts World Manila

A mini festival of Broadway music and elegant fashion will be staged at the Newport Plaza at Resorts World Manila on Aug. 9 at 7pm.

The musical-cum-fashion show will be directed by much-acclaimed Theater Actor and Director Bobby Garcia and will showcase some of the country's most sought after and world-class musical theater actors DJ Mendoza, Tata Dimaro, Cassa Bermudez, and Lea Salonga (also here).

While the audience will indulge in aural delight as the performers sing Broadway hits from musicals like "Cats," "Rent," "Les Miserables," "Miss Saigon," and "Phantom of the Opera," they will also proudly flaunt on-glamour-looking avant garde and Broadway-inspired outfits by top designers Tina Gomez, Rang Pineda, Joel Pino, and Bayong Ecsanglo. The combination of music, glamour and high-fashion is expected to instill a spirit on those who will be fortunate enough to watch "Broadway on the Runway."

The show is a unique event with multiple perspectives against a backdrop of music and fashion—the much-anticipated "Broadway on the Runway"—is must-see that will forever be etched in the mind.

The show will be mounted by The Pied Tay Marketing Group, Inc. and co-presented by Resorts World Manila. Official photographer is Jojo Rabacal while hair and makeup is by Ramon Fuentes, shoes by Manolo.

Major sponsors are: Sony Philippines, CB

Richard Ellis (CENTER), ASAP, Lt./Brad Wachter, Jerome Commodore Surgery Ellen and Vanessa Van Steenkiste Carolyn, Bandung Bryant, Christopher Spencer Arnesto, Marlyn Ramirez Bombay Commemorative and Pharm Shop Inc.

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Tickets for P2,000 go with contacts. For ticket inquiries and reservations, please call (632) 665-1902 / 0908-4149619 (SMS) 734-1707 or Resorts World Manila 830-8222 and Ticketworld 891-9999, www.ticketworld.com.ph.

US obesity growing 'faster than anyone imagined'

WASHINGTON—Obesity in the United States has grown "faster than anyone could have imagined," doubling in adults and tripling in children in recent years, a leading health official said on Tuesday.

The number of states where more than 30 percent of residents are obese tripled, from three to nine, between 2007 and 2009, Dr. Thomas Frieden, the head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), told reporters at he released's him from the 2009 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).

The BRFSS has been tracking health conditions and risk behaviors in the United States yearly since 1984.

"Less than a decade ago, in 2000, not a single state had an obesity prevalence of 30 percent or higher," Frieden said.

This year, added Frieden, no one state managed to achieve a goal set by health officials to cut the rate of obesity to 15 percent or less.

Instead, an additional 2.4 million US adults self-reported to the BRFSS that they were obese, pushing the national obesity rate up by 1.1 percentage points to 27 percent, according to the BRFSS.

BRFSS statistics put the obesity rate lower than the 34 percent prevalence reported by the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES).

Frieden blamed the difference on the data collection methods used by each survey: BRFSS is self-reported while "in NHANES, participants are weighed and measured."

Obesity is defined as having a body mass index—calculated by dividing a person's weight in kilograms by their height squared in meters—greater than 30.

In health terms, it means a person is at greater risk for a whole host of maladies, ranging from high blood pressure to diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

The rising rate of obesity in the United States is driving up medical costs as

IN CHINA TOO An obese Chinese boy does sit-ups in a weight-loss camp. A third of primary schoolchildren in China suffer from psychological ill health due to classroom stress and parental pressure, say British and Chinese researchers. AFP

complications from the condition, including heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer, arthritis and kill more and more people, said Frieden.

In 2008, medical costs associated with obesity were estimated at $147 billion, Frieden said.

"That translates into medical costs for people who are obese that were 1,429 higher per person each year compared to normal-weight individuals," he said.

A separate study published on Tuesday in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine found that the percentage of obese adults in the United States shot up by 90 percent in 16 years, from 14 percent in 1991 to 27 percent two years ago. AFP

SM CITY NORTH EDSA TO BUILD 25 GK HOMES FOR ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

As part of its 25th Anniversary Celebrations, SM City North Edsa will be building 25 homes in Bagong Silang, Caloocan City in partnership with Gawad Kalinga

As part of its 25th Anniversary Celebrations, SM City North-EDSA will be building 25 homes in Bagong Silang, Caloocan City in partnership with Gawad Kalinga.

Each of the homes located at Phase 6-A Package 11 Sitio Ilog Area, Bagong Silang, Caloocan City will be 21 square meters each. The project, which will amount to Three Million Pesos will be named as SM City GK Village. Its target completion date will be in November 2010, just in time for SM City North-EDSA's 25th anniversary.

The project brings together SM Prime Holdings, the country's leading developer of shopping centers, who takes the lead in corporate social responsibility projects through its SM Cares program, and the Gawad Kalinga Community Development Program, which undertakes the role of building communities in depressed areas. The latter's primary objective is to become a catalyst in uplifting the quality of life of the poor through its Gawad Kalinga Program which includes shelter, health, education and livelihood geared towards an integrated, holistic, and sustainable development.

SM Prime Holdings President Hon. T. Sy and GK Founder and Chairman Mr. Antonio Meloto recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement formalizing the partnership at SM Corporate Offices. SCMC AVP for Operations Mr. Bien Mateo and Brgy. Bagong Silang Capt. Cesar Padilla joined them in the event.

SM Prime Holdings President Hons T. Sy and GK Founder and Chairman Mr. Antonio Meloto recently signed a Memorandum of Agreement formalizing the partnership at the SM Corporate Offices. SCMC AVP for Operations Bien Mateo and Barangay Bagong Silang Captain Cesar Padilla joined them in the event.

The building of the SM City GK Village is one of the many ways SM City North-EDSA will do its share for the communities it serves as part of its 25th Anniversary celebrations.

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■ Indian BPO firm expands RP operations /B3

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Editor Raul G. Marcelo ■ Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

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Stocks hit highest in 31 months

Favorable income reports boost demand

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOCAL STOCKS yesterday climbed to a 31-month high, breaking past a key barrier at 3,500 as selective buying of index stocks defied a cautious overseas sentiment.

The main share Philippine Stock Exchange index gained 19.51 points or 0.56 percent to end at 3,503.49—its highest close since ending at 3,503.570 on Jan. 11, 2008.

The local stock market, one of the best performing in the world, has now gained 450.41 points or about 15 percent since the start of this year.

"Basically, we're in the middle of earnings reporting season so there's some demand for stocks anticipated to have performed well in the second quarter," said Jose Abot Lanzo, head of research at local stockbrokerage Campos Lanuza & Co.

"At the same time, there's so much liquidity in the market. Interest rates have declined so much so there's a lot of liquidity going to the stock market," Lanzon said.

The property and holding firm counters led the rotes-day rally, surging 1.76 percent and 1.3 percent, respectively.

Among the day's top index gainers were property issues Megaworld, Filinvest Land and Ayala Land.

The lenient rate-sensitive property sector is seen benefiting from a potentially prolonged regime of low interest rates given risks of a double-dip global recession and deflation.

Consumer-oriented stocks Alliance Global Group, Jollibee and Universal Robina were also among the day's gainers.

The local market usual exhibit despite an overnight pool-making in Wall Street. Value turnover amounted to P5.29 billion. The 81 advancers equaled the number of decliners while 45 stocks were unchanged.

Among the stocks that succumbed to profit-taking were Metrobank, Ahaitic Treasy, SDC, BPI, Globe Telecom, PLDT, First Gen and Philweb.

Losses incurred by the services and mining/oil sectors tempered the day's gains.

"Week 1H data added to tension worries over the growth path of the economy shared, pulling stocks largely lower overnight. Meanwhile, earnings reports in the US failed to lift sentiment when the market is so used to upside surprises," said investment bank Credit Agricole CIB.

It said global markets were now focused on the upcoming Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting on Aug. 10. The Fed is believed to be working under the assumption that the next likely interest would be for a gradual but uneven recovery.

Price of RTBs to be set in Aug. 10 auction

By Reena V. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT will offer P35 billion worth of retail treasury bonds (RTBs) through a price-setting auction set on Aug. 10, according to a group of banks jointly arranging the issuance.

Roberto Juanchico Ongpin, First Metro Investment Corp. executive vice president, yesterday said P18 billion would be in five-year RTBs, another P10 billion in seven-year securities and the remaining P5 billion in 10-year issues.

Ongpin said the banks were confident that they could raise more than P116.4 billion for the latest RTB float, referring to the total amount that was raised in 2009.

Aside from FMIC, the joint arrangers include BDO Capital, BPI Capital, DBP Landbank, Metrobank, PNB and RCBC.

The latest offering is the 12th RTB batch since 2001 when the government raised some P15 billion.

Discussion from the Bureau of the Treasury showed that the government raised P550 billion from the 11 previous RTB issuances.

In a signing ceremony between the Treasury and bank officials yesterday, Finance Secretary Cesar V. Purisima expressed reluctance in allowing the new RTB issuance to exceed P100 billion.

Even then, Purisima said the timing for yet another RTB float was favorable to the government considering a bullish outlook from investors.

"We've had a peaceful transfer of power and this [new administration] does not have credibility issues," he said.

SM Prime profit up 10% in first 6 months

SM PRIME Holdings Inc. grew its second-quarter net profit by 11 percent year-on-year to P1.9 billion on the back of strong consumer spending.

This brought SMPH's first semester net attributable net profit to P3.8 billion, up 10 percent from a year ago.

For the second quarter alone, revenues rose 10 percent to P5.6 billion. Cash flow as measured by earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (Ebitda) stood at P4 billion, up 17 percent from the same period last year, or an Ebitda margin of 67 percent.

Ebitda margin measures the extent to which cash operating expenses use up revenue.

Consolidated revenues grew 11 percent to P11.3 billion from the first semester last year. Six-month Ebitda grew 12 percent to P7.7 billion, or an Ebitda margin of 68 percent.

Operating expenses during the first six months increased 9 percent to P5.3 billion. Income from operations increased 17 percent to P6 billion.

"The encouraging results declared by SM Prime validate our position positioned as the economy, which is fortified by demand by robust consumer spending, in that light, we look to the second half of the year with more optimism to execute on our expansion plans," SM Prime president Hans Sy said.

MPIC seen spending ₱116B

Expansion of infrastructure concerns in next 5 years

By Doris C. Dumlao

INFRASTRUCTURE HOLDING firm Metro Pacific Investments Corp. plans to spend at least ₱116.6 billion within the next five years for the expansion of its power, water, railway and hospital businesses.

In a briefing on Wednesday, MPIC president Jose Ma. Lim also said the company's first semester net profit attributable to parent company grew by about 3 percent year-on-year to ₱1.75 billion, given the substantial contributions from operating subsidiaries Manila Electric Co., Maynilad Water Services Inc., Metro Pacific Tollways Corp. and the hospital group.

Core net income for the period, taking out foreign exchange and other non-recurring items, surged by 169 percent to ₱1.93 billion from a year ago.

"Reflecting our strong operating performance during the period, we are modestly confident in raising our guidance on core (and ballistic) for 2010 to ₱5.3 billion from earlier figure of ₱5 billion," MPIC chairman Manuel Pangilinan said.

The first semester profit reflected a net foreign exchange loss and non-recurring losses of ₱170 million booked by the parent company.

On the five-year capital spending budget, the bulk of the capital outlays would be made by Meralco, which is seen spending ₱50 billion, including the roll-out of new power generation projects.

In the first half, Meralco's core net profit rose by 82 percent to ₱8.01 billion on the back of a 55-percent revenue growth to ₱127.46 billion.

Water utility unit Maynilad is programmed to spend ₱31 billion for the development of alternative sources of raw water and improvements in facilities to bring down leakage from 51 percent this year to 40 percent by 2013.

On the first six months, Maynilad posted a core net income of ₱2.01 billion versus ₱1.21 billion in the same period last year. Revenues increased by 24 percent to ₱5.46 billion on the back of a 27-percent growth in water service earnings and 9 percent rise in earnings from sewerage services.

For toll-road unit MPTC, about ₱14 billion in funds earmarked over the next five years for the Subic-Clark-Tarlac expressway connection, while ₱20 billion is budgeted for a new network of toll-roads connecting various major roads leading to the South Luzon and South Luzon Expressways.

Globe cuts capex, expects lower profit

By Paolo G. Montecillo

A CONFIDENT Globe Telecom Inc. has cut its expansion budget this year to keep costs down and avoid investing in strong areas of the local telecommunications market.

In a briefing on Wednesday, Globe president and CEO Ernest Cu said the firm would likely post lower profit this year compared to last year, mainly as a result of its rosy country's cutthroat pricing, which has changed the dynamics of the local mobile phone industry.

"We're not even talking about an income growth for this year," Cu said, adding that it would be hard to even sustain last year's ₱32 billion profit.

Earlier this month, Globe reported that its net income for the first semester of 2010 had dipped by about 10 percent to ₱5.1 billion. Meanwhile, rival Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. posted a 11-percent rise in profit in the same period to ₱18.3 billion in the same period—the company's slowest profit growth in over a year.

Cu said this reflected the decline in industry profit margins as a result of the "hardest" pricing or unlimited services offering by both text messaging and voice calls.

These promos, which were pioneered by Globe-spawned-but-stable brand Sun Cellular, allow users to send an unlimited number of text messages within certain periods of time for a fixed fee.

Cu said as much as 90 percent of all messages sent within the Globe network were covered by these promos. About 90 percent of voice calls are also on bucket-priced or unlimited services.

Bubbling campaign

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Bautista III

They want things definitive.

* * *

ANYWAY, since the new administration is still in the campaign mode, some groups are still talking about the last elections—the five automated polls to the country.

The main target is of course the Commission on Elections, which was said to have conspired with Smartmatic to rig the elections.

And so, boiling behind the organization called Computer Society of the Philippines, they just had to file complaints against the Comelec before the Ombudsman.

They claimed the Comelec (with Smartmatic) disregarded "security" features in the automated polls for the "massive" cheating.

So you think that nobody informed them that even the Department of Science and Technology reported 100 percent accuracy of the voting machines, based on its tests way before the elections?

Well, the DOST report was well publicized, because the same department official minced it to the House committee investigating the election irregularities.

So, the Comelec spent more than ₱7 billion for the automated elections, which by whatever computation, was a lot of money.

It so happens that the head of the Computer Society (computerman in the Outlook, that is) is a certain Jack Arguelles Arcinas.

He happens to be the general manager of Avante International Technology, which is an IT company in New Jersey (USA). The company took part in the Comelec bidding for the automated poll contract. It lost.

Another influential figure in the Computer Society happens to be Con Lagman, who was lobbying hard before the elections for his own plan called the Open Election System (OES), which would use manual voting and counting, in combination with electronic transmission of the results.

Word just around that the Comelec may also enter into a long-term management with Smartmatic, particularly for the 2013 mid-term elections. Where will that put the losers in the last bidding?

The Comelec merely leased the IT machines from Smartmatic. Under the contract nevertheless, the Comelec has the option to buy them outright.

That, to the Comelec, means a lot of savings. It does not matter after interested groups happy.

* * *

ANOTHER campaign, this time, is a demolition job against a senator. Majority Floor Leader Sen. Vicente Sotto III.

The media version of Sotto-ology in Makati was saying that he was just a celebrity, and as such, he did not do much to Congress.

True, the senator gained popularity as a television personality. Before that, he is not a do-nothing lawmaker.

But the record, Sotto sponsored and authored more than a hundred laws, including the creation of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, the PDEA, the absentee voting law, and the seatbelt law, to name a few.

One reason behind the badmouthing against Sotto could be the perception that he was campaigning for senator, the senate presidency with Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile.

But Sotto was the only independent senatorial candidate who won in the last elections. Meaning, he owes nothing to any political group or any of the factions in the Senate.

Price of RTBs . . .

From page B1

the finance chief said.

"We need to [raise funds and] address the need for infrastructure that will help the country become more competitive in the region, especially amid efforts toward economic integration in Southeast Asia," he added.

Moreover, Purisima said there was no need to raise a big amount from the RTBs since the government was also planning a peso-denominated bond offering for the international market.

He said the so-called "peso global bond" offer would be worth at least ₱300 million and slated before the year ends.

SM Prime profit . . .

From page B1

for the first half, SM Prime's consolidated annual revenues continued to outperform the biggest shares, growing 13 percent to ₱9.3 billion. The increase was accompanied by the continued strength of the company's real estate revenues and the added space resulting from the opening of new malls in 2009—SM City Naga, SM City Rosario and SM Center Las Piñas, together with SM City Tarlac, which opened in April of this year.

Boni C. Bautista

UCPB BALANCE SHEET

UCPB CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

KEY OFFICERS

UCPB CORPORATE OFFICES
[NOT Makati Avenue,
Makati City, 1200

Indian BPO firm expands RP operations

By Abigail L. Mo

INDIAN BUSINESS process outsourcing firm Cognizant has expanded its Philippine operations to 600 seats, to take advantage of the wealth of talents that the country has to offer.

In a briefing yesterday, Cognizant global delivery president and managing director G Chandrasekaran said the company's previous 200-employee operations could no longer meet the needs of the clients being serviced here.

The company started operating in the Philippines in October 2009, providing high-end business transaction processing services to a global telecommunications industry player.

The Manila delivery center, situated at the McKinley Hill in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, could accommodate 600 seats and 800 employees.

The company is currently hiring to fill these new seats.

"We plan to also move to other cities, to leverage the talents and keep our costs down. Just as we have done in India, we'll also be expanding here in the Philippines," he said. "Based on customer feedback, there's a big potential for this (Philippine) center to grow."

He said that growing Cognizant's presence in the country fit well with the company's overall strategy of "reinforcing at arbitrage," or taking advantage of talents where they were located.

Aboitiz, Taiwan company pursue Subic coal project

By Jerry R. Sosito

SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY (SBMA) Chairman Roberto V. Ongpin (left) and Aboitiz Power Corp. President and CEO Erramon I. Aboitiz sign a memorandum of agreement for the development of a 300-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Subic Bay Freeport. Looking on are Aboitiz Power Chairman Jon Ramon Aboitiz (second from left) and Taiwan Cogen International Corp. Chairman Chen Yen-Chi (second from right).

LIFESTYLE Food

Eggplant-'malunggay' lasagna, 'tokwa't galunggong,' custard in 'kalabasa'—three low-salt dishes

WHILE THE Filipino palate continues to crave for that added salt "sa asim," the number of Filipinos diagnosed to have hypertension appears to be on the rise.

But, it doesn't mean we have to eat bland food to keep us healthy all the time. Every day Filipino dishes can still be made delectable and healthy even with minimal sacrifice.

To help make a low-salt diet a part of our family's healthy lifestyle, grab a copy of Nicole's "Low-Salt Recipes for a Healthy Heart" recipe book. Here are three nonsensitive recipes from it (visit www.nicoles.com.ph):

Eggplant-Malunggay Lasagna

¼ c fresh tuna flakes
Olive oil
4 large eggplants, sliced thinly
2 cloves garlic, minced
3 white onions, sliced into rings
8 fresh tomatoes, sliced into wedges
1 c malunggay leaves (no stems)

Cook fresh tuna in olive oil over very low heat for 5 minutes. Do not allow tuna to brown. Remove tuna from oil using a strainer and set aside. Fry eggplants in oil used in fry tuna until eggplants turn golden brown. Set aside.

Sauté garlic, onions and tomatoes. Add tuna and stir in malunggay leaves. In a small glass pan, place a layer of fried eggplants, then spread a layer of tuna-malunggay mixture on top. Repeat alternating layers of eggplants and tuna-malunggay until ingredients are used up. Serve with sliced lemons.

Notes: This dish uses the natural rich taste of tuna, tomatoes and malunggay to create a salt-free flavorful dish. The monounsaturated fat from olive oil, fiber and iron from malunggay, and omega-3 fatty acids from tuna help reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Tokwa't Galunggong in Spicy Balsamic-Honey Vinaigrette

1-2 c of water
10 peppercorns
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 bay leaf
350 g fresh scad, cut into small cubes
6 medium-size galunggong fillets with skin
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
Pinch of ground black pepper
2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
Vinaigrette
1 tbsp garlic, finely chopped
1 tbsp pure honey
1 tbsp red onion, finely chopped
3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
¼ c extra-virgin olive oil
Pinch of dried chili flakes
Pinch of ground black pepper

To make the spicy balsamic-honey vinaigrette, combine all ingredients in a bowl and whisk until oil and vinegar are well mixed. Set aside.

In a saucepan, bring to a boil water, add peppercorns, garlic cloves and bay leaf. Cook tofu in boiling water for five minutes. Drain tofu, removing stinging bay leaf and pepper. Brush galunggong fillets with balsamic vinegar. Sprinkle with black pepper and drizzle with olive oil. Sear tofu to retain gloss for couple of minutes. In a hot nonstick pan, grill marinated fillets 5 minutes on each side, skin side first.

To serve, spoon half of tofu onto plate with three grilled galunggong fillets on the side. Garnish with parsley sprig or chopped spring onion.

Note: This is the healthy version of takoy'Soloy', which has no salt or fatty pork. Tofu is loaded with protein and healthy protein from soya. Omega 3-rich scaded galunggong is perfect with this Balsamic vinegar from grape is high in antioxidants, and extra virgin olive oil counter heart-friendly monounsaturated fat.

Custard in Kalabasa with Strawberry Sauce

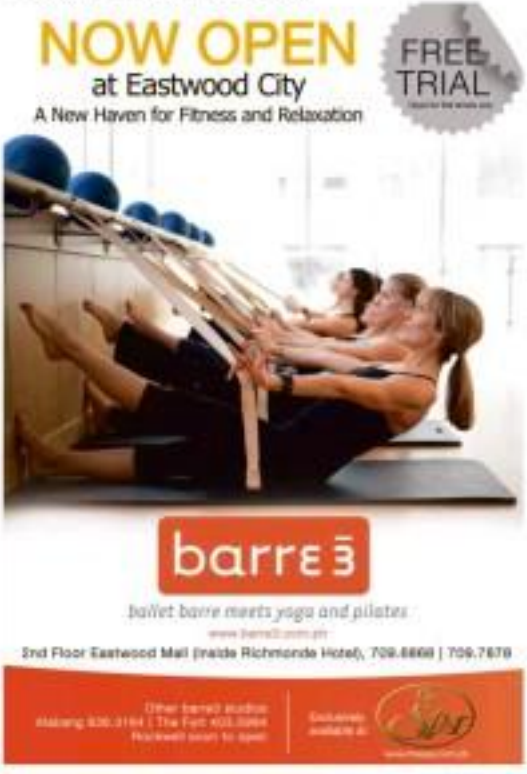
Whole squash
Custard
4 eggs
1 c Splenda sugar
2 c skim milk
1 tsp vanilla
Strawberry sauce
Fresh whole strawberries
Water
Splenda sugar to taste (optional)

Cut squash in half crosswise. Remove seeds. In a large bowl, beat eggs for 2 minutes. Add custard and beat until blended. Stir in milk and vanilla. Pour mixture into two kalabasa halves.

Place kalabasa with custard in a steamer until it sets, about 3½ hours. Remove from steamer and let cool. Refrigerate for 2 hours.

Chop strawberries and place in a blender. Add a little water and blend until smooth. Sweeten to taste.

To serve, kalabasa slice at the center of a dessert plate. Scoop teaspoons of strawberry sauce and line the side of the plate with dots in increasing sizes. Top the biggest dot with a whole strawberry.



GARFIELD

A. LUPIN

PUGAD BABOY

DICK TRACY

LOVEHOOTS

JAMES BOND

DRINK COMEDY

BABY BLUES

TULDOK

BEN

BIRD MACHINE

SHERMAN'S LAGOON

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

ARIES (March 21 to April 20) This is a busy day, with errands, short trips and communications with associates, especially siblings. Don't stay at home ... get involved in something!

TAURUS (April 21 to May 20) Money, cash flow and possibly ways of increasing income are on your agenda today. Some of you will take care of chores or repair something you own.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) The future is on your radar today, making you a bit more ambitious than usual. However, it also makes you a bit restless than usual. Yes, you!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Work behind the scenes or alone today. Meditation, quiet time or solitary pursuits are favored. Some of you might even connect with a mentor or a book.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Connect with a female friend or coworker to get the most out of your day. A new friendship might develop, but ongoing friendships could deepen in an emotional, revealing way.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Money, assets, lenders and other will matters something about your salary, possibly something personal (perhaps about your family). Be aware of this.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Try to do something different today. Run errands, work on hobby-type projects, meet with associates, and you could learn something new!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) This is a good day to discuss shared property and how to divide something. Troubles might worm into your life and take you in unexpected directions.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Whatever the future is capable and your today, you will have to go more than halfway to meet it halfway with others. This could mean you have to compromise a little. Worth the effort!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) Set aside time to get more information about your job, your health or your daily routine. Take care of little things, and don't overlook the unexpected! Be somewhat careful that you are more on top of your game.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Take a stand in the workplace, if you do, the old, unlovable times with children, and anything having to do with close business will please you today. Make romantic love.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Keep to home, friends and finances today. Talk to parents. A female relative might want to confide in you. It's your move — you might want to volunteer some time.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

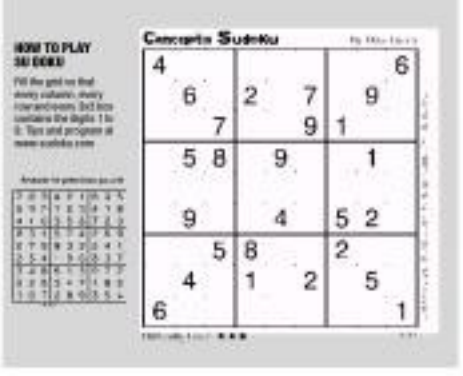
Answer to yesterday's su doku

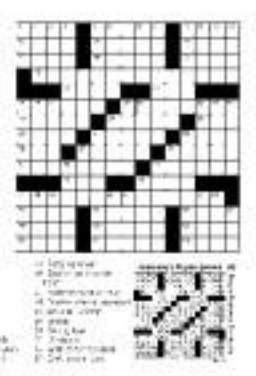
3	1	6	5	7	8	4	9	2
5	9	7	1	4	2	6	3	8
1	4	2	9	3	6	5	7	1
8	7	9	3	2	5	1	4	6
2	5	3	7	6	1	8	2	9
6	8	4	2	9	1	3	5	7
9	2	5	4	8	7	3	6	1
4	3	1	6	5	9	7	8	2
7	6	8	3	1	2	9	4	5

Concepts Sudoku

4								6
	6		2		7		9	
		7			9	1		
	5	8		9			1	
9					4		5	2
		5		8		2		
	4			1	2		5	
6								1

CROSSWORD PUZZLE





What makes a winning dish? Ask the Philippine Culinary Cup judges

THE FIRST Philippine Culinary Cup is underway at the SMX Convention Center, the most prestigious culinary competition in the country to date.

According to Chef J Gamboa of the Les Toques Blanches Philippines, which runs the Philippine Culinary Challenge, the highlight of the event is the appearance of international judges plus the duties of the Thai Iron Chef Carving team.

Gamboa's competitors are working anywhere but happen. Frayed nerves cause participants to forget what they've practiced and perfected many times before. Quite understandable, it is never easy to be a player in front of a panel filled with highly seasoned palates.

What makes a winning dish? What elements must it have to get the judges' stamp of approval?

I asked the judges of the prestigious Philippine Culinary Cup.

What advice can you give to participants of culinary competitions?

Many competitors are under the impression they have to create something new and never done before. In rare cases, this is successful, but mostly fails. Since there's time pressure, negative results are a possibility.

Pick your hero/favorite dish, something you have done many times before. Improve on it, refine it, give it an extra touch, add an element of surprise.

—Rudy Wallet, executive chef, Hong Kong Disneyland

On flagging/keeping work stations clean?

"Practice mise en place, work on the recipe and practice! Clean as you go at all times."

—KK Yau, executive chef, Dorsett Regency Hotel, Kuala Lumpur

What must one keep in mind when conceptualizing a dish/curry?

"Current culinary trends, colors, shapes and cooking techniques, as well as to present a dish that makes the person want to eat it." —Meenambika Hindi, culinary consultant, Bangkok, Thailand

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

What does a judge look for to achieve a dish?

"First, how the plate is presented—size, shape, but first how the dish. All food items must be neatly placed. Size to look appetizing. Most important is taste. So the flavors harmonize together, is it seasoned right, does the main component in the plate stand out?"—Knut von Bunau, chef lecturer, Le Cordon Bleu, Dusit, Australia

Tips on plating a dish?

Select the appropriate plate and size for the dish. Usually, white brings out the color of the food best. It must have all the components required like protein, starch, vegetables...depending on the competition guidelines. Proper portion size, only a little sauce on the plate, some served separately. Simply arranged. Proper oven temperatures, not under/overcooked. Appealing to the eyes, different textures, preparations and natural colors. Obviously, it is the taste and harmony of flavors.

—Kurt Fecteau, corporate executive chef, Griffith Laboratories, Bangkok, Thailand

What makes a perfect plated dessert?

Beauty and taste.

Creative dessert is an art, which requires a complete knowledge of the traditional method. There are no shortcuts in mastering the established fundamental cooking methods and techniques.

Gastronomy from different cultures opens doors to new techniques and flavors.

Make use of the best producers and ingredients. Find the perfect blends of flavors. If (taste, texture, temperature) elegant, compositions...are key words. Look for different forms, presentations within our surroundings and try to translate that to your plate.—Kenny Kong, executive pastry chef, Westin Stamford & Westin Plaza, Singapore

Tips on conceptualizing a plated dessert for competition—practicality up-to-date, aesthetic. Dessert is the last impression that you give your guests, so it's important to make it last. —Andy Fan, executive pastry chef, Grand River, Singapore

Gamishing is, often, either over- or under-emphasized. Any thoughts?

Research on the new trends. Simple, nice to look at, something that will "wow" us! Nothing overpowering, must be real, nice and doable. —Eric Bost, executive pastry chef, Grand Centara, Bangkok, Thailand

Any particular skill a participant must work on? How would a participant prepare for a competition like this?

Interpret, understand, prepare and practice specifically for the category selected. Perform and show the judges that you have done the skills 100 times before.

Do not overdo a dish and forget the basics. Taste, clean and check every opportunity you can.

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Daily previous winning dish...

Spicy seared tuna, cognac-laced lobster bisque, roast duck salad, tuna confit—fine dining for a cause

By Valgie Bago-Reyes

JOY AND HELP make a Filipino feel a better student and better leader.

And we have one week to make it happen through Philippine Tatler's Philippines' Best Restaurants Charity Week on Aug. 13-20.

See, for a change, Philippine Tatler is foregoing the usual lavish cocktail reception to launch its restaurant guide's newest edition, and have it's news gathering events.

"We tired of doing just another big launching party that would last three hours with 300-400 guests," explains Irene Muriel Francisco, managing director of the Philippine Tatler and the "Philippines' Best Restaurants" publications.

That's the good but we do that every year for our charity-oriented Tatler Ball. This year, we've decided not to spend an enormous amount of money for the launch alone, but rather make a charitable activity and donate the money to a beneficiary that's well-run and whose focus is on education."

The charity is the Manila De Manila (MDM)'s De Ramfilyo program, called Manila De Schools Calling Me, Kid (CMK), nurtures high-achieving public-school elementary pupils.

The Charity Week will feature 64 of the 150 establishments listed in the "Philippines' Best Restaurants" 2010 which's preparing special set menus or dishes and contributing 10 percent of the revenue from these meals to Manila De Manila.

Muriel Francisco had such an easy time involving the restaurants to this marching passion.

"They know it's a win-win situation because they get publicity and donate at the same time," says Muriel Francisco. "Charity Week is the perfect way for all involved in the guide book to share with a benefactory the blessings we all enjoy. The 10 percent of sales from selected menus will surely make a difference in the lives we touch."

The goal is to raise P1 million for a week. But if it doesn't meet expectations, Muriel Francisco adds, "We will fill in the gap. I don't believe in approaching a group and saying, can you be our beneficiary? I don't want them to feel that we are just using them, so I committed a million. Whether or not we will be able to raise such amount through these restaurants, we will give the money. That's just the way it is."

Today's heroes

The proceeds will directly go to Manila De Manila's educational endeavor. Wynn Wynn Ong, president of Manila De Manila, says there are three kinds of children who will benefit program—illustrious and Nuevo de Bolero in Intramuros and Swiss in Makati.

"Jesus called me just after Christmas with the idea for this project," says Ong. Talmik, really, for MDM, we live on the generosity of others. We always proclaim we are unashamed because we were funds, but we may when you're asking something for a good cause. I thought Jesus's office was wonderful."

For MDM's education program, Ong says the students are screened and taught leadership values, the meaning of heroism as well as the basics of how to survive lunch, like to eat.

Since the program was launched in 2007, it has mentored 120 students from the three public schools. Pupils also experience field trips that enhance the learning process and deepen the bond between them and their mentors.

"The success of the program is tangible," says Ong. "We just 'graduated' our first batch of three-year CMK pupils a month ago. We have sent them 10-year old-become mature, confident, and fluent English and Tagalog-speaking young adults. We watched their personal business proposals and set up successful small businesses during their summer break, which we funded, and they paid back," says Ong.

The money that will be raised during Charity Week will be used to sponsor the program in other public schools.

"We hope not only to expose this circle many times over, but to get scholarships for our children in good schools. So far we have planned a few, but are considering other options. We want them to have an even better chance of success. We're sure what they are capable of, and we want to enable them to take their place more easily among leaders in the Philippines," says Ong.

CHEERS! Ian A Lacson (pictured), Manuela Regala, Banca de Alva's head of marketing communications; Irene Muriel Francisco, managing director of Philippine Tatler magazine and the "Philippines' Best Restaurants" publications; and Wynn Wynn Ong, president of Manila De Manila

Restaurant guide

Charity Week is the first cause-oriented project for the annually published "Philippines' Best Restaurants," a book that guides readers through the numerous dining options available in the country's cities, including Baguio, Boracay, Cebu and Davao.

Besides featuring the current issue of 151 best restaurants, the 2010 edition includes a photo listing of Manila's favorite bars and clubs, wine shops, delis and markets. It also contains an article by Michael Odenkirk about wine tasting in Napa Valley, ranging from South Africa to Sonoma, California.

The book, which is supported by American Express Selects, has also expanded online. Launched in July 2009, hotelsingapore.com carries all the reviews found in the print book as well as up-to-date dining news, events, culinary promotions and other features.

For Charity Week, restaurants like Budgett Discovery Shores, Boracay, have prepared a set menu for dinner. For starters, Indigo will offer spicy seared tuna, followed by cognac-laced lobster bisque. Main entrée will be garlic-saffron glazed Chilean sea bass and for categorized for dessert.

Chef Jessie Sanchez of Barbara Restaurant & Bar will also contract a unique set menu of Roast Duck Salad in orange-citrus dressing served with crispy pappadum, Tiered Soups in tortoo glasses (Creamy Batanville, Clear Essence of Asparagus and Shitake Mushroom), Prawn Grapes, Tuna Confit in light tomato-tarragon cube served on a bed of assorted lettuce with marinated asparagus and parsley potatoes, and Trio of Endemic's Best Desserts (French Chocolate Kiss, Bare Cherry Cheesecake and Pistachio-Lime Rivah).

Participating restaurants are 11 Prime, Antonio's, Aristo by Claymond Hotel, Asterpine, Atrium, Banana Leaf, Banana Leaf Asian Cafe, Barotac Wine & Tapas Bar, Bo Cafe Mediterranean, Cappucio Restaurant Italiano, Chef Lucullus Bistro Filipino, Chun Bocca Sura Restaurant, Cibo (all branches), The Champagne Room, Enchanted Restaurant & Bar by Chef Jessie, Escolta, The Establishment, The Crystal Room, Fire Lake Grill, The Fireplace, Heat, Ito Angus Steakhouse, Ivanhoe, Indigo at Discovery Shores, Jo Inin Guest Island, Josephine's Rajasthan Bar, La Cocina de Tita Moning, La Regalade French Bistro, Lemon Grill, Lorenzo's, Li Li, Lusso, Mahabay Palace, Mahan, Mango La Lobby Lounge, Manores, Maya Fusion Cuisine & Adventure, Mumbai, Banana Leaf, Banana Leaf Asian Cafe, Bantay Wine & Tapas Bar, The Grill, Mediterranean, Capucc

DINING OUT

'Kuhol' in coco milk and green 'sili'

KUHOL'S ADOBONG Kulitan Cafe has mild spicy flavors of coconut milk and green chili flavors, located at the G/F, The Venice Piazza, McKinley Hill, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City. Call 8561888.

Bottomless cocktails

Everyday is "kalbo" day with the offerings at Stone sunrise to sundown bottomless cocktails at selected Dimolo's outlets. For P356, ladies (and even sons) can drink all the house Margaritas, Cosmopolitan and Mojito they can have. Pair bottomless cocktails with Mucho Nachos, Tomato and Cheese Nachos, Stone Cheese Wraps, Vegetable Kabobs, Crunchy Bits, Dimolo's top cookies in S'mores, Mcintosh, Snickerdoodle, Sliced Albacore, Brittany Heirloom Squares, CDP and Tartlac.

Seabass with truffle

The Bellevue's Café d'Asia presents Chef's Super Dish of the Week until September. Selections include Seabass with Truffle Vinaigrette, Poached Salmon Rose with saffron, Turkey Fricassee Asparagus and Thai Fried Mixed Seafood. Call 7716161.

Sandwich line

Richmonde Hotel's Lobby Café offers the Sandwich Trio: Smoked Salmon Mousse Sandwich, Roast Beef Sandwich and Grilled Chicken Sandwich. Call 8387777 local 3332.

Seafood galore

Diwalwal offers seafood galore. The sets are: salad at Aubang Steam Combo, 3/1, Corte de las Palmas (7722980); Mango-La Playa Mall, 6/L, The Ledge (5434888); and Commerce Tolentino Mall, North Triangle, Quezon City (981 2607).

'Tapa' and garlic

Mr. Jones prefers Tapa and Garlic Overload, Alaskan Stuffed Mac 'n Cheese, Challah French Toast, Char-Grilled Superman Burger, Eggs Benny Two Ways and the Hot and Spicy Shrimp Scampi. Mr. Jones is located at the G/F of Greenbelt 5, Ayala Center, Makati City. Call 459 8900.

Hyatt's privilege card

Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila offers the following benefits for HOPC members: 30 percent discount on all food and beverage outlets from Monday to Thursday; 20 percent discount on all food and beverage outlets on weekends, holidays, birthdays and special occasions; and 15 percent discount on all Accor's spa services. Members can also enjoy free Internet access, a complimentary lunch for two at Market Café for membership renewal (valid only for cards with 2009 and 2010 expiry date). Members of Accor receive a Preferred Member (non-voucher

SPAGHETTI AND MEATBALLS Yellow Cab serves Spaghetti and Meatballs, Chicken Alfredo Pasta, Chaffle Char Chicken Pasta. Visit www.yellowcabpizza.com or call 5899999 for 24/7 Great Pizza Delivery (within Metro Manila only).

AMERICAN CUISINE TGIF's today's American Taste Tour offers dishes that represent America's cuisine from Hawaii, San Francisco and Los Angeles, to Louisiana and New Orleans. They are available until Sept. 10.

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COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Jovito

It's only a 45-minute plane ride–you can eat and run

OYSTERS AND diwal were what we had looked forward to on a trip to Capiz. They were there daily on our table, so that by our last night, we must too satiated we couldn't eat anymore.

Diwal is that cute shellfish called locally as "angel wing" (Pteria colymbus). It's hardly found in Manila because it hardly reaches Manila, since it is heavily consumed in the area where it thrives, mostly on Panay island.

For a while, it was becoming rare because of over harvesting. A program of the government and UP Visayas revived its spawning places. It seems to be working because the price of diwal has gone down. I was told it used to be about P300 per kilo, now it's down to P98.

Fishermen/women aren't happy but consumers definitely are. It's still a win-win situation because the program helped the cultivation of diwal.

Both shellfish were served at our first lunch in the house of Nonie Alarcon. As usual, the kitchen was busy as open one with brick-based stoves.

On our previous visits, those stoves and her oven were wood-fed. There's a change, she said. This time, her stoves use a smokeless charcoal burner. Trust Nonie to have something better for cooking.

She was also the one who showed me that an empty soft drink can can be converted into a mini-gas stove, something she use being used at a roadside market.

For Glenda Barretto, who was with us, oysters are not supposed to be eaten cooked—boiled, baked or steamed. Gapi is where she ensures her oysters are fresh and she feels that to have the real taste of oysters, it should be eaten as is.

Wet market

To prove that, at the wet market on a Sunday, when the whole town seemed to be there buying, eating and selling, Glenda asked the vendor who was shucking oysters to do some for her. She took each oyster direct from the shell. We all followed suit. We created such a stir because everyone gathered around us taking our pictures as we slurped.

Without, we bought vinegar and asked for some salt for extra flavoring.

We must have been the entertainment of the day judging from the crowd around us, laughing at these crazy people eating raw oysters.

At Nonie's lunch, Glenda was ready with her dipping sauces for the oysters. She had brought vinegar and Japanese soy sauce, lots of lemon and wine vinegar. Each meal-

now was amazing, but we all thanked her for drinking diwal.

That lunch had other seafood—grilled prawns straightened by sticking a bamboo stick in it, steamed seafood cooked in coconut milk with saluyot (jute), tambon (shoots and leaves) bits and crab adobo with a sauce enriched with roe.

But the meats were plenty as well. There was dish braised in sugar palm (buong) juice. There was native chicken stuffed with glutinous rice, malagkit cooked like lechon or pasella.

The chicken and the ducks were from Nonie's personal raft area in the bank, where the pancodas were also nesting and so shed off their beautiful feathers. There was also tender roasted lamb.

A sampling of the wet cakes (kakanin), such as two kinds of sutsuit and the bocayo, were included in the dessert buffet that also had butter cake and Dulce pistachio semi-rival from All Sandiquet, another pastry in town.

Nonie said the lunch at her place was her recipe; they weren't exactly the cooking of Capiz.

The latter, she said, can be found in the many grill places along the highway (shortest: "Ito ang sosyal stall of choice, point to what you want, go through a chaos of smoke into the interior lined with tables and chairs. One can get carried away with the orders of oysters, diwal, inihaw (big dishes), squid, shrimps and crabs.

The children who sell peanuts and will sing for you are glad to have what you can no longer eat.

If you're the type to eat and run, Capiz is the best place because it's only 45 minutes to Roxas City by plane. Have breakfast in the market, lunch in the bayleu stalls and fly back in the afternoon.

E-mail: jmovito@yahoo.com

ENTERTAINMENT

Edna Emerie G. Velarde

Well, did she or didn't she?

TABLOID reports: Kim Chiu attempted suicide. Denials came swiftly. Even Thera Cuhi of Star Magic: "We are laughing it off. Kim has an clutch to live for." Boing Osorio of ABS-CBN Corporate Communications: "Kim was not HOSP... Nobody as ever." Bayani San Diego Jr.

Plagiarism raps vs 2 directors

By Marinel R. Cruz

TWO veteran directors, Gil Portes and Joel Lamangan, are being accused of lifting story lines from previous works for their movies exhibited at the recent 2010 Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival.

Portes allegedly copied the idea for "Tanging Ina" from the script of "Bryanong Nuno"—whose writer, filmmaker Glenn Quinto "Bong" Ramos, said he submitted it in 2007 to the Cinemalaya screening committee, which included Portes. "Ina Finatonin" won five awards in this year's event: Best Director for Portes; Best Screenplay for his co-writer Ade Tiamzon; Best Cinematography; Audience Choice and Special Jury Prize.

Cinemalaya says...

Bong has posted comments in Facebook stating Portes. On July 26, Portes released a statement, signed by Cinemalaya officials Lamberto Casilhol and Nestor Jardin, saying the screening committee "found no plagiarism or copyright infringement involved in the film."

In a phone interview on Monday, Casilhol told the Inquirer that movie producer Bobbit Tan and writer-director Fernando "Bing" Lee, two members of the screening committee in 2007, were consulted about the statement. Tan and Lee had both read the scripts of "Pan-Ho-nenuki" and "Byahenig Nuno," the statement said, and concluded that "the two are distinctly different from each other."

Added Casilhol, "Their only similarity is that both are road films involving a coffin. Portes's is a black comedy. Bong's is a drama." "Pan-Ho-nenuki" is about a woman's journey from Tagaytay to the north, to transport in the north, to move the body of her daughter after a heated mix-up.

"Byahenig Nuno" is the story of a family sending off their soldier father, who died while at sea, to his final resting place in Lemery.

By phone on Tuesday, Bong said he respected the committee's decision. But, he added, "I don't know how they investigated this. They did not arrange for Portes and I to talk face-to-face. I just wanted them to hear my side." He said he wanted to file an official complaint but that Portes' statement was forceful.

Bong's issue of contention: "Portes read the [Byahenig Nuno's] script. He even discussed what he liked and didn't like about it. He was very excited... he asked if he consider selling the script. I wouldn't have protested if Portes wasn't part of the committee that year. There's definitely malice."

SCENE from "Signs," to it based on the seven-turned-TV movie "Desaparecidos"?

At this point, said Bong, he'd like to prove to Casilhol and the screening committee that he's right, "to prove them wrong."

Casilhol said the issue was as good as dead. "We can't bar ownership of an idea. Plagiarism is a very strong accusation. You must prove that your work was copied word for word."

'Desaparecidos'

Asked whether writer Lualhati Bautista, meanwhile, has called attention to Lamangan's "Signos," which, she is saying, is very much like her 1989 TV movie, "Desaparecidos" (based on her own novel about missing political dissidents in the 1970s) in "concept and approach."

Bautista wrote (via e-mail) to the Inquirer: "I watched 'Signos' at the UP Film Center to be sure ... as I do not want to prejudge anybody without basis ... True enough, there is a very striking similarity ... and that is the very scene-repeat of a mother searching for the daughter she has lost, which is the basic, unifying element of the movie."

In person her point, Bautista made a comparison: "Signos" is told from the point of view of Dolly, a Justice correspondent of a US magazine who takes the MP, Oliver (Bugbo Amio). During a raid, she hands over her daughter to her wannabe lover ... "Desaparecidos" is told from the point of view of a non-married rebel, Anna, who entrusts her 3-month-old daughter to a comrade, Keda..."

Bautista—author of the novels-turned-films "Dekada '70," "Dito, Bata, Hanto Ko Si-nuwat," and "Gapo"—added that she first submitted "Desaparecidos" for a sitcom aired on UBM 7 in 1997, with Lamangan as director.

In 2000, she said, Viva Films bought the film rights for "Desaparecidos" but did not push

PAGASPAS 2/2

CIGE Almazol, Regine Velasquez, Joanna Nitra Garcia

Regine takes lead in new indie film

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

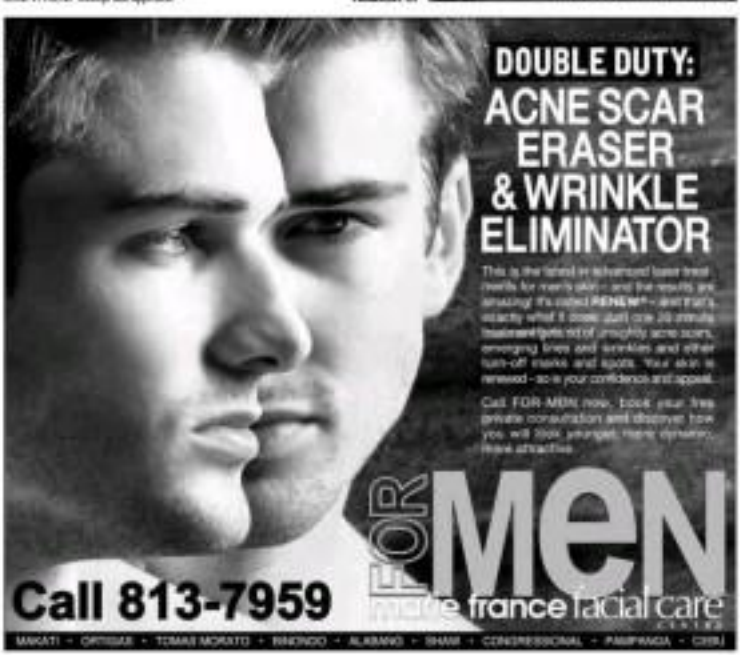
SINGER-actress Regine Velasquez is making her first independently produced film under Panoramastilla and Emote Wire Garcia, the producer and filmmaker behind "Planting."

Garcia says the role is something new for Velasquez: "It's not a romantic comedy and she doesn't have a leading man." Velasquez agreed, saying, "I've never done anything like this. I always play women who are looking for love. But in Dante's movie, I'm a mother who's just trying to survive."

In the family drama titled "Miss Stress," Velasquez plays a woman who sells fake diplomas and other forged documents in Manila's University Belt.

Garcia said Velasquez instantly expressed interest upon hearing the story. She even volunteered to dub Garcia's "pitch video" for prospective investors. "We did it at her home recording studio," he said.

Shooting may start next month. Garcia previously directed Velasquez last year in a cameo for "OMG," her boyfriend Ogie Alcasid's comedy film with Judy Ann Santos in her cast. "I hope Judy will guest in this film," Garcia said, "because it's set in 1994, the peak of one of her TV shows."



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GALLERIA

1 TEKKEN	6 THE LAST AIRBENDER (Digital 3D)
2 INCEPTION	7 CHLOE
3 THE LAST AIRBENDER	8 SALT
4 THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE	9 HATING KAPATID
5 SALT	10 HALIK SA TUBIG

MANILA

1 TEKKEN	6 HATING KAPATID
2 INCEPTION	7 SALT
3 THE LAST AIRBENDER (Digital 3D)	8 CHLOE
4 THE LAST AIRBENDER	
5 SALT	

METRO EAST

1 TEKKEN	5 SALT
2 THE LAST AIRBENDER (Digital 3D)	6 HATING KAPATID
3 INCEPTION	7 SALT
4 THE LAST AIRBENDER	8 CHLOE

NOVALICHES

1 HATING KAPATID	4 THE LAST AIRBENDER
2 TEKKEN	5 SALT
3 SALT	

FORUM ROBINSONS

1 THE LAST AIRBENDER (Digital 3D)	3 TEKKEN
2 SALT	4 CHLOE

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STA. ROSA

1 FURRY VENGEANCE	5 SALT
2 HATING KAPATID	6 INCEPTION
3 SALT	
4 INCEPTION	

LIPA

1 THE LAST AIRBENDER (Digital 3D)	4 SALT
2 HATING KAPATID	5 THE KILLERS
3 THE KILLERS	

DASMARIÑAS

1 THE LAST AIRBENDER	4 HATING KAPATID
2 SALT	5 FURRY VENGEANCE
3 HATING KAPATID	

STARMILLS

1 THE LAST AIRBENDER (Digital 3D)	4 SALT
2 HATING KAPATID	5 CHLOE
3 INCEPTION	6 FURRY VENGEANCE

IMUS

1 HATING KAPATID	4 THE LAST AIRBENDER
2 FURRY VENGEANCE	5 SALT
3 THE LAST AIRBENDER	

ANGELES

1 HATING KAPATID	4 SALT
2 DOT TUR TIME MACHINE	
3 THE LAST AIRBENDER	

TACLOBAN

1 A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET
2 SALT
3 HATING KAPATID

DUMAGUETE

1 ROBIN HOOD
2 SALT
3 HATING KAPTID

BACOLOD

1 THE LAST AIRBENDER (Digital 3D)
2 CHICO
3 SALT
4 INCEPTION
5 FURRY VENGEANCE
6 HATING KAPATID

ILOILO

1 THE LAST AIRBENDER (Digital 3D)
2 HATING KAPATID
3 LETTERS TO JULIET
4 CHICO
5 THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE
6 SALT

DENSAN

1 THE LAST AIRBENDER (Digital 3D)
2 HATING KAPATID
3 SALT
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ILOCOS NORTE

1 PREDATORS
2 SALT
3 ROBIN HOOD

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Glamour cats

From page D4

a break. My seat assistant and I still were mere intruders into the show.

I spread nearly all this idle time watching the dancers in the wonderful costumes of interesting with sometime from the cast or crew. Still as an isolated character, I wasted my backstage time to be more social.

My next appearance is as a piece of scenery known as "Pride Rock" some 20 feet above the stage. It's quite safe up there, and I've come to feel secure up on it.

More humiliation

At the end of the ball, I venture the stage to endure more humiliation before being left alone to sing "Memory Act 1." When I end, I am broken all over the floor, catching some valuable rest. Unmasked, we now hold off, venture and choreographers are being restrained, and a few choreographers engaged to demand an encore bow.

I have two more appearances to make: "Moments of Happiness" (back on "Pride Rock") and the big 11 o'clock number, "Memory." I love being perched on my "Pride Rock" for the beginning of Act II; it gives me a good view of Rafiki (Alyssa Diaz) as she sings the Swahili version of "Memory" which goes as follows:

Umeona, hatujui anglikwisha
Ang jang alcalcang pabay na sasha
Ita Boming, Sipiya ay mahalagayan
Bagong bukay ay darating

This is met with thunderous applause.

I head to my dressing room to venture up for "Memory." Ich-come-today, drink-come-wine and fall out the watch "Research more"... Funny, my friend Peter Inside some pops in my usual makeover. I play head games with myself... "It's alive, you hear! ..." It says. It keeps things in perspective and my feet on the ground.

I time my final bathroom break for when "Elizabethtown" is performed by associate soloist director/choreographer **Marlkan Gaston**. My instinct is dry enough now; it's not to get a bottle to go to the potty. I take a few more sips of water, and wait to sing.

Unnerving

I hear Mufasa sing the last few lines of poetry. It's time to get out there and sing. The song goes by quite quickly and for the most part, conservatively it's a mixture shaky and sinewich, at other times more confident. Perhaps I should wish for it to never ever be perfect, to always have a faint memorable, like a Lebanese carpet. It's unnerving when I hear a crowd in any actual line. But then again, given the role I have to play, a crack just might be what I need, as long as I'm telling a truthful and honest story.

Finally, the song is over. The receiving line is formed, and I head up the line with Old Glory. Our time is at its highest point, I found especially and that's time when we to a "crowds" high above the stage. Our final encounters those sweets are up there. I take off my coat, gloves and hats, put on a pair of dazzling gloves and black sneakers, take a sip of water and start my climb down from "The Rewinds Lives" back to reality.

What a night, and I get to do this eight times a week!

Plagiarism raps...

From page D4

through with plagiarism. "Had that film [Steve under], it would have also been directed by Emmerich," Bautista sneered. "In the director would have known, he has in his possession a copy of my [Elizabeth] script. And that is not to mention the book credits available for the reading pleasure of Lumangtas and [redacted] of Soul Signs."

Lumangtas told the Inquirer on Monday, "[Bautista] has an iconopoly over the motherlooking-for-daughters theme. The creative way for media, but the approach is different. And I don't have a copy of her script anymore."

Lumangtas added that Bautista might as well sue other the creators of the American film "Boys Of My Daughter" (Shania Effiott), and the late, who directed "Anderson. Shame. He sing Singing Song Just" These films beat the trace theme, Lumangtas pointed out.

In another e-mail, Bautista said, "I don't like trouble, but I owe it to myself to protect my work." Asked about Ms. Gallina, she cited Bautista to file a formal complaint before the Commission supporting counselors.

E-mail me at mail@inquirer.com.ph

2 Pinoy indie directors hailed in Japan, Kosovo

By Marinel R. Cruz

TWO FILIPINO directors were recognized recently for their excellence in independent film making.

At the recently concluded 7th Skip City International D-Cinema Festival in Saitama, Japan, Filipino Jason Iggpuyan del Rosario bagged the Best Screenplay award for his heart-tugging documentary "Bahid Boys" ("Children Made Down"), festival organizers announced on Monday.

At the same time, Khavn dela Cruz has been picked as judge in the annual Dokufest, an international documentary and short film festival in Prizren, Kosovo.

"The Japanese who got in touch 'Bahid Boys' said they were amazed with (lead actor) Meljun Gatoza. They said he's a natural," Jason told Inquirer Entertainment on Tuesday. "They also said they were saddened by the stories of the kids, who at an early age are already working to help feed their family."

Pinay 'wunderkid'

According to Dokufest's official website (www.dokufest.com), Dela Cruz will sit on a judge in the international short film competition with Australian filmmaker of the USA, and Elisabeth Djaward of Norway.

The ongoing event, which runs until Aug. 7, is screening 150 films from 34 countries.

Dela Cruz, dubbed in the site as a "Philippine wunderkid, will screen eight films—"Kubrador and the Mermaid of Dagmar," "Iso: Open Letter to All the Bureaucrats to the World)," "Barang Barakuda," "Blackwaterman," "Liquid cam," "Kinglio Jesus," "The Decorating Star" and "Ultimo."

Glamour Cat, part 2

WHEN I LAST LEFT you, the show was about to begin with everyone toting a pair of "green eyes" and heading to their (supposed) places—the curtain contractors on the orchestra, boxes and balconies of the CCP.

A few times, we've encountered members of the audience who haven't yet made it to their seats. During our first public performance, I was walking "human-like" with a few other cats when we saw a couple of latecomers.

I had a chant: "Your in luck-lights!" moment and had no idea what to do. Alessio (Glen Oliver), one of the older members of the company, masterfully sprang into character. I followed his lead, adopting a more "feline" posture.

I was once reprimed on the way to my "green eyes" spot. Thankfully, Mandarangy (Shaina Bernardo) and the twins (Brian Gillespie and Jim Simmons) were there.

At a particular moment, the back doors open, and the cats streams into the theater. Finding "green eyes" in members of the audience. I've gotten a "Oh, hello!" and an "Sweetie"—which makes me feel good. Once in the backstage area, I place my eyes back on the table, take a big gulp of water, and head to my official starting position in the mouth of the cat. Yes, I do dance in the spotlight number, actually, all the dancers in the show do.

"Infinite Songs for Infinite Cats" lasts for about seven minutes, at which point seven is screaming down everyone's faces (thanks to the jab hair wigs), full-body animals, wooden leg and arm warmers, and the CCP's less-than-ideal air-conditioning.

Once "The Naming of Cats" is over, I run back to my dressing room to get ready to play Grizabella. The wardrobe, first wig, and the shoes are replaced by a mop of gray curls, streams of black eyeliner, cracked red lipstick, very too much blush, brown lines, a ratted fur coat, uneven stockings, a black flapper dress and gloves with dark red fingernails. Took a flight that I have lovely scrapes up at that time—Old Deuteronomy Ushin Effio makes his own acquaintance here, too.

"The Awakening/Memory" lip service is Jan about finished, and "The Rum Tum Tugger" is about to begin. I head over to stage right. My time on stage for "Skimmbl" isn't very long, but it's packed with split-second transitions of bumbledom with a few members of the cast. Much of it is spent with Mistoffelees' Wish, Grin and Mimik kind of have "frenzy."

I head offstage through the audience. Once out of sight, I take off my glasses and run and do an eye dressing room costume change. It's now drenched in sweat and Bella swaps me in.

QUANDUR D3

BACK STORY

Lea Salonga

Lady Gaga's creative outlet—down there

US POP STAR Lady Gaga is known for skimpy outfits and sexually-charged performances, but she says she fears having sex would deprive her artistic energy.

"I have this weird thing that if I sleep with someone they're going to take my creativity through my vagina," the performer said in an interview with Vanity Fair magazine that was released on Monday.

Lady Gaga is not the only pop star to laud abstinence. Miley Cyrus, the Jonas Brothers and "American Idol" winner Jordin Sparks have sworn "promise rings" as symbolism a pledge of chastity and marriage.

Lady Gaga is on the cover of Vanity Fair's September issue. A photo spread of the "Poker Face" singer in little more than a rhinestone choker, accompanies the interview.

Reuters